

The situated construction of language ideologies in Aruba: a study among participants in the language planning and policy process

Eric Niels Mijts



Promotoren

Reinhild Vandekerckhove | Pol Cuvelier | Universiteit Antwerpen

Michael Meeuwis | Universiteit Gent

Proefschrift voorgelegd tot het behalen van de graad van doctor in de taalkunde aan de Universiteit Antwerpen en doctor in de Afrikaanse talen en culturen aan de Universiteit Gent
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Promotoren:

Reinhild Vandekerckhove, Universiteit Antwerpen

Pol Cuvelier, Universiteit Antwerpen

Michael Meeuwis, Universiteit Gent

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**Universiteit
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Cover picture: Reconstruction of a 1954 Aruban classroom at the Aruban National Archive. The text in Dutch reads "De rijn komt bij lobith ons land binnen" (The Rhine enters the Netherlands at Lobith). This sentence on the blackboard is used as punishment as it has been re-written seven times. It is illustrative of the way in which Dutch geography would be taught out of context in the Dutch Caribbean, and even more, how this Dutch text would be inaccessible for the Papiamentto-speaking students in the Dutch Caribbean classroom who would never see the river Rhine. (Credits: Picture by Evert Bongers, artwork by Joost Horward)

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Samenvatting

Dit onderzoeksproject gaat over de ingewikkelde relatie tussen taalideologie, kolonisatie en de sociaaleconomische mobiliteit en emancipatie in voormalige koloniën waar het overgeërfde koloniale taalbeleid doorklinkt in het taalbeleid van tegenwoordig. Dit taalbeleid geeft voorrang aan de taal van de voormalige kolonisator boven de thuistalen van de mensen in onderwijs, en ook vaak in de rechtspraak en in bestuur. Een analyse van bestaande theoretische modellen die erop gericht zijn om inzicht te verschaffen in de processen die onderliggend zijn aan taalbeleid toont aan dat deze modellen onvoldoende ingaan op de complexiteit van de formulering en implementatie van taalbeleid, vooral daar waar het gaat over de impact van geloofssystemen in de samenleving, de contradictoire krachten die eigen zijn aan dekoloniale verhoudingen en het veelzijdig karakter van processen van taalbeleidsvorming op alle niveaus.

Ondanks de erkenning door internationale instituties van het belang van onderwijs dat vertrekt vanuit de thuistaal, heeft 40 procent van de kinderen van de wereldbevolking geen toegang tot onderwijs in hun thuistaal. De zelf-evidente maar incorrecte dominantie van de taal van de voormalige kolonisator vormt een taalkundige onbalans in deze wereld die veel mensen en gemeenschappen de mogelijkheid om naar school te gaan in hun eigen taal ontnemt, en beperkt daarmee hun

intellectuele ontplooiingsmogelijkheden, creativiteit, gevoel van veiligheid en sociaaleconomisch potentieel. Het ontnemt hun samenleving haar potentieel om daadwerkelijk verandering te brengen, om te staan voor haar eigen cultuur, levenswijze en leefomgeving.

Vooraf daar waar het gaat over formele onderwijscontexten heeft deze koloniale erfenis een aantal knelpunten tot stand gebracht die grote invloed hebben op deze samenlevingen. Over het algemeen wordt de koloniale taal verkozen als onderwijstaal voor secundair en hoger onderwijs, en als de thuistaal al gebruikt wordt in basisonderwijs, dan is dat met als hoofddoel om de ontwikkeling van taalbeheersing in de koloniale taal te ondersteunen.

In deze studie heb ik aangetoond dat het handhaven van de koloniale taal in onderwijs en in andere domeinen van taalgebruik hand in hand gaat met ideologieën die de taal, cultuur, instituties en onderwijssystemen van de voormalige kolonisator als superieur voorstellen, terwijl de thuistalen worden gepresenteerd als inadequaar, ongeschikt voor onderwijs, of zelfs ook ongeschikt om als taal benoemd te worden. Aan de hand van juridische documenten, beleidsteksten, onderzoeksrapportages, gedrukte media en sociale mediadiscussies heb ik de persistentie van koloniale taalideologieën aangetoond doorheen de geschiedenis en doorheen verschillende tekstgenres in de meertalige kleine eilandstaat Aruba. Bovendien heb ik aan de hand van vijf case studies aangetoond dat deze koloniale taalideologieën ook de basis zijn voor de hiërarchische positionering van thuistalen in andere landen.

Deze structurele hiërarchische positionering wordt bewust en onbewust aanvaard en ondersteund door de meerderheid van de bevolking, terwijl juist weerstand bestaat tegen het inclusieve gebruik van de thuistalen voor onderwijs, rechtspraak en bestuur. Het beleid en de praktijken van de voormalige kolonisator worden voetstoots als gegeven beschouwd en worden in principe niet ter discussie gesteld, terwijl de mogelijkheid van de ontwikkeling van meer passend en inclusief beleid op basis van de thuistalen wordt verworpen op basis van ideologische aannames over prestige, gebruik en functie van talen.

Uit dit onderzoek trek ik de conclusie dat het begrip van ideologieën en geloofssystemen over taal, onderwijs en sociaaleconomische ontwikkeling de structurele en ideologische aard van ongelijkheid op basis van taalkeuze in meertalige dekoloniale staten kan blootleggen. Concreet maatschappelijk draagvlak voor transitie die de talen van de meerderheid van de bevolking van voormalige kolonies bevorderen kan enkel tot stand komen als de persistente aannames over de minderwaardigheid van thuistalen tegenover de talen van de voormalige kolonisator geïdentificeerd, blootgelegd en kritisch geanalyseerd als overblijfselen van het koloniaal verleden. Pas als het structureel ideologisch karakter van het taalbeleidsdebat wordt erkend, kan het worden geadresseerd. Dan kan ook de langzame incrementele ontwikkeling van taalbeleid in dekoloniale staten tegemoetkomen aan hun meertalige werkelijkheid als emanciperende kans, eerder dan door taalbeleid dat gebaseerd is op subtractieve meertalige of exclusieve

eentalige ideologieën als exclusieve middelen die mensen van elkaar scheiden.

Summary

The focus of this research project is the intricate relationship between language ideology, colonization and socio-economic mobility and emancipation in former colonies where the present-day language policies echo the inherited colonial language policies. These language policies favor the use of the former colonizer's language over the home languages of the people in education, and often in legal practice and governance as well. An analysis of existing theoretical models that aim to offer comprehensive insight into the language policy process demonstrates that these models do not sufficiently address the complexity of the formulation and implementation of language policy, especially in terms of the importance of belief systems in society, the contradictory forces which underpin decolonial relations, and the multi-faceted and multi-level character of the language policy making processes.

Despite international institutional acceptance of the importance of mother tongue-based education, the 21st century reality is that - at least - 40% of the world's children have no access to education in their home language. The mistakenly self-evident dominance of the former colonizer's languages in education has negatively impacted access to knowledge, quality education and socio-economic mobility. The linguistic unbalance in this world deprives many people and

communities of the opportunity to go through a schooling system that uses their mother tongue as the language of instruction, and as such limits their intellectual opportunities, creativity, safety and socio-economic potential. It also deprives their communities of the potential of being agents of change, of standing up for their own culture, lifestyle, and environment.

Especially when it comes to formal education settings, this colonial legacy has led to a variety of challenges that have a major impact in these societies. More often than not the colonial language is chosen as the main medium of instruction for secondary and higher education, and if the home language is used in primary education, it is mainly with the goal of supporting the achievement of some degree of proficiency in the colonial language.

In this study, I have demonstrated that the maintenance of the colonial language in education and in other domains, goes hand in hand with ideologies that present the former colonizer's language, culture, institutions and education systems as superior, whereas the home language(s) are presented as inadequate, as an unfit tool for teaching, or even as unfit to be called a language. At the hand of legal documents, policy texts, research papers, print media and social media discussions I have demonstrated the persistence of colonial language ideologies throughout history and across different text genres in the multilingual small island state Aruba. Furthermore, at the hand of five additional case studies, I have demonstrated that these colonial language

ideologies also underly the structural hierarchical positioning of home languages in other countries. This structural hierarchical positioning is consciously and unconsciously accepted and is supported by the majority of the population, who continue to be reluctant to embrace an inclusive use of their home languages for education, the judiciary and governance. The former colonizer's policies and practices are in principle not disputed but rather taken for granted, whereas the possibility of development of more suitable and inclusive policies on the basis of home languages is rejected off hand on the basis of beliefs about the prestige, use and function of languages.

On the basis of this research I draw the conclusion that an understanding of the ideologies and belief systems concerning language, education and socio-economic development can expose the structural and ideological nature of inequality on the basis of language choices in multilingual decolonial states. Full support for transitions that favor the languages of the majority of the people of the former colonies can only materialize when the persistent beliefs about the inferiority of home languages vis a vis the languages of the former colonizers are identified, exposed and critically analyzed as remnants of the colonial past. It is only when that structural ideological nature of the debate is recognized that it can be addressed. Then the slow incremental change in language policies in decolonial states can fully embrace their multilingual realities as unifying opportunities, rather than maintaining

language policies based on subtractive multilingual or exclusive monolingual ideologies as separating tools for exclusion.

Resumen

Este proyecto de investigación trata de la relación compleja entre la ideología del idioma, la colonización y la movilidad socio-económica y la emancipación de los ex-colonizados, donde el manejo del idioma colonial hereda aún su influencia. El manejo del idioma tiene una prioridad sobre el idioma de la colonización previo al idioma de los casos de enseñanza, y frecuentemente de la práctica legal y de la gobernanza. Mi observación es que el modelo teórico existente proporciona información sobre el proceso de manejo de la lingüística que no se ajusta adecuadamente a la complejidad de la formulación y aplicación de la política lingüística, especialmente en lo que respecta al impacto en el sistema de creencias de la sociedad, que es quizás contradictorio específicamente en la relación del descolonial y la naturaleza polifacética del proceso de formulación de la política lingüística en todos los niveles.

A pesar del reconocimiento de la institución internacional del bienestar de la enseñanza, con el salido del idioma de los casos, el 40 por ciento de la población mundial no tiene acceso a la enseñanza de su idioma de los casos. La dominancia auto-evidente, pero incorrecta, del idioma de la colonización anterior forma un desbalance idiomático en el mundo, lo que priva a muchos de la posibilidad de seguir estudiando en su idioma, y esto limita su posibilidad de desarrollo intelectual,

nan creatividad, nan sinti di seguridad y nan potencial social-economico. E ta priva nan sociedad di su potencial pa trece cambio real, pa defende nan mesun cultura, forma di bida y nan comunidad.

Principalmente unda ta trata e contextonan formal di enseñansa, e herencia colonial aki a trece un cantidad di obstaculo cu tin gran influencia riba e sociedadnan aki. En general, ta scoge lo colonial como idioma di enseñansa pa enseñansa secundario y avansa, y si ta uza e idioma di cas den enseñansa basico, esaki ta cu e meta principal pa sostene e desaroyo di dominio di e idioma colonial.

Den e estudio aki mi a proba cu e manteneamiento di e idioma colonial den enseñansa y den e otro areanan di uzo di idioma ta bay man den man cu e ideologianan di e idioma, cultura, institucionnan y e sistemanan di enseñansa di e colonisado previo presenta como superior, mientras e idioma di cas ta presenta como inadecua, inapropia pa enseñansa, y hasta tambe inadecua pa referi na esakinan como idioma. A base di e documentonan huridico, texto di maneho, raportahe di investigacion, media imprimi y discusion den media social, mi a proba e persistencia di e ideologia di idioma colonial atraves di e historia y atraves di e diferente generonan di texto riba e isla, chikito y multilingual, Aruba.

Ademas, mi a demostra a base di cinco caso di estudio cu e ideologianan di idioma colonial ta tambe e base pa e posicionamento herarkico di e idioma di cas den otro pais. E posicionamento herarkico estructura ta

acepta na un manera consciente y inconsciente y sosteni door di e
mayoria di e sociedad, mientras hustamente tin resistencia contra e uzo
inclusivo di e idioma nan di cas pa enseñansa, practica legal y
gubernacion.

E maneho- y practicanan di e colonisado previo no ta disputa, pero mas
neglisha, mientras e posibilidad di desaroyo di maneho mas adecua y
inclusivo a base di e idioma nan di cas ta rechasa di biaha a base di e
pensamentonan tocante e prestigio, uzo y funcion di idioma.

Di e investigacion aki mi ta conclui cu un comprendemento di e
ideologianan y sistema di creencia relaciona cu idioma, enseñansa y
desaroyo socio-economico por expone e naturalesa structural y
ideologico di desigualdad, a base di e escogencia di idioma den e
estadonan decolonial multilingual. Un base di sosten social concreto pa
transicionan cu ta faborece e idioma nan di e mayoria di e poblacion di e
ex-colonianan por materialisa solamente ora cu e creencianan
persistente tocante e inferioridad di idioma nan di cas ta identifica,
exponi y criticamente analisa contra di e idioma nan di e colonisadonan
previo como e residuo di e pasado colonial. Ta solamente ora e
naturalesa di e ideologia structura di e debate ta reconoci, cu por
atende cu ne. E ora e desaroyo incrementa pocopoco den e manehonan
di idioma den e estadonan colonial por embrasa nan realidad
multilingual completamente como oportunidadnan unificado, na luga di
mantene manehonan di idioma basa riba ideologianan multilingual

subtractivo of monolingualismo exclusivo, uza como herment di separacion pa exclusion.

Preface

As a child I had the privilege of going through a schooling system that used my mother tongue, Dutch, as the language of instruction. I was not aware that that was a privilege, as in the class of which I was part, all children spoke a variety of Dutch at home. This privilege has allowed me to develop all kinds of skills, including skills in other languages, and to complete higher education. My experiences of the past 22 years, living and working in the multilingual small island state of Aruba has made me aware of this. Children in Aruban schools are taught in Dutch, a language that is a foreign language for most of them, and more than 30 percent of the children in school speak another language than the home language of the majority of the population, Papiamentu. Only recently a decision was taken to begin the introduction of a multilingual education system, and it has taken decades to reach that decision. Throughout these decades, time and again heated discussions have taken place on the language of instruction, and it has always surprised me how easily negative opinions on Papiamentu have been expressed and how strong the voices have been for the maintenance of Dutch as language of instruction, both from inside Aruba as well as from the Netherlands. As an outsider who has had the honor of being part of the Aruban community for the past 22 years, and throughout the process of the study that underlies the present work, I have come to a deeper understanding of the colonial character of the maintenance of the

status quo of Dutch as language of instruction in Aruba. It is this understanding that I present in the pages below.

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In the first place I want to express my gratitude to my three promotors, Reinhild Vandekerckhove, Pol Cuvelier, and Michael Meeuwis.

Throughout this trajectory I have enjoyed their professional positive, constructive and collaborative support, inspiration and feedback. The distance between the Caribbean and Europe and the complexities of the COVID-19 pandemic, have not made this the easiest project to complete, however, the moral support and conscientious input that I received during this research project has helped me to further develop my skills, knowledge and critical insights.

At the end of this trajectory, my colleague and friend Nicholas Faraclas made a tremendous effort in polishing up my non-native English and helped me find the words that eluded me, thank you for that Nick. I also express my gratitude to my colleague Zuleika Fernandes, who took the time to translate the summary of this book into Papiamentu, further enabling accessibility to the book and its contents.

A special word of thank you for the administrative support staffs of the University of Antwerp, Ghent University and the University of Aruba that always make sure that this kind of processes run smoothly.

In the past decades I have been taught by great teachers and I have worked with many inspiring colleagues and friends that have all helped me further develop, thank you all for the inspiration and support, and also thank you for your patience.

And finally I say thank you to my dear wife Anita, my partner on this path of life, who makes sure that there is oxygen, relativity, trees, a bigger picture, and a place to come home to. Without Anita, all this would never have happened.

I did this research and wrote this book because the linguistic unbalance in this world deprives many people and communities of the opportunity to go through a schooling system that uses their mother tongue as the language of instruction. This deprives them of intellectual opportunities, creativity, safety and socio-economic potential. It also deprives their communities of the potential of being agents of change, of standing up for their own culture, lifestyle and environment. Please do support home language education and multilingual schools if you believe in equal opportunity in a decolonizing world.

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter introduces the problem description, followed by an overview of the problematic development of inclusive language policy and planning in the small island state Aruba. This introduction is followed by a description of the geopolitical and historical context and for a better understanding of the complex nature of language policy and planning in Aruba the chapter concludes with a description of the political position of Aruba within the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

This study explores the ideological building blocks of the justification of language laws, language policy texts and other discourses from a critical discourse analysis perspective, through thematic text analysis, intertextual and interdiscursive analysis.

Making an inventory of the building blocks of these ideologies and reconstructing their architecture will help reveal the specific belief systems that drive and perpetuate current language practices in education. My starting observation, which I will unpack in due course, is that no comprehensive and widely accepted language policy is designed with the goal of effecting positive change in language practices in schools and society. Yet it remains at present unclear which underlying processes paralyze politicians and other decision makers. In this study, I set myself the task of coming to grips with these underlying processes.

To understand these processes, one must understand the underlying ideologies of the main stakeholders in language planning and policy. These ideologies are constructs of individuals, groups and institutions. They are either explicit or implicit and all are based on beliefs that are treated as truths (Verschueren, 2012). Identifying implicit ideologies and argumentation requires examining not only *what* people say, but also *how* they say it.

1.1 Problem description

The current situation of the dominance of Dutch in governance, law and education in the Caribbean parts of the Kingdom of the Netherlands can be explained only through a path dependency, in which, time and again, critical junctures have not led to decisions that favor the mother tongue of the majority of the population (Winkel, 1955) (Prins-Winkel A. , 1973) (Dijkhoff & Pereira, 2010) (Mijts, 2014) (Mijts, 2020). The lack of legal acceptance and promotion of creole languages is emblematic of the dominance of the languages of the former colonizer not only in decolonizing Caribbean islands but also in other decolonizing small island states and other decolonizing territories. Even though the home language of the vast majority of the population of these countries is often not the language of the former colonizer, the colonial language is usually chosen and maintained as the official language, thus marginalizing the home language (Bröring & Mijts, 2017) (Mijts, Kester, & Faraclas, 2020).

Especially when it comes to formal education settings, this colonial legacy has led to a variety of challenges that have a major impact on socio-economic, cultural and intellectual life in these states. More often than not the colonial language is chosen as the main medium of instruction for secondary and higher education, and if the home language is used in primary education, it is mainly with the goal of supporting the achievement of some degree of proficiency in the colonial language. In Aruba, as i will explain amply in section 1.2 below, educational outcomes are considered to be generally unsatisfactory, with high drop out ratios, as well as high failure rates for those who make it to higher education. Reliable figures on this are unavailable, but CBS-Aruba reports that 40 percent of students at the end of primary education are at least one year behind (Esser, 2004), the Social Economic Council of Aruba reports that 43 percent of the Aruban labor active population has no starting qualification from secondary education (SER - Aruba, 2016) and on the basis of research among the students that do go on the higher education - in the Netherlands - the Dutch national ombudsman reports on major challenges for study success for students from Antillean descent, including Aruban students (Nationale Ombudsman, 2020) the findings of which are confirmed by the research of Geerman and Leona (Geerman & Leona, 2020). This results in a low percentage of higher educated Aruban citizens in society and on the labor market. Multiple reports and publications (see chapter four, sections two and three of this volume) over more than five decades attribute this low success rate partly to the choice of the Dutch language

as medium of instruction in primary education. The use of Dutch, often awkward given that most pupils and teachers are Papiamentu-speaking, alienates pupils from the educational process and to create extra obstacles to academic success.

A linguistic phenomenon directly linked to settlement colonization and the slave trade is the emergence of linguistic varieties such as pidgins from contact among peoples of different ethnic and linguistic backgrounds (Mufwene, 2001). In multiple cases, varieties such as creoles emerged from that contact, as pidginized varieties came to be spoken natively by many speech communities. Varieties such as pidgins and creoles can therefore be said to have resulted from the forced geographical displacement of people due to colonial expansion and enslavement and the inevitable contact with European languages in that expansion. Mufwene and Vigouroux (2017, p. 85) describe this process when they state that “creoles emerged as varieties that are structurally divergent from their lexifiers not as direct by-products of the tropical spaces where they developed but of the particular ways in which these geographical spaces were constructed by the colonial masters and to a certain extent also by the enslaved people themselves that evolved in them.” The more these colonized spaces were racially segregated, the less possibility there was for interaction between the European descended minority and the non-European descended majority, thus facilitating the emergence of new language varieties rather than the adoption of (a variety of) the colonial language.

In colonial times the superiority of the colonizer's culture, level of 'civilization', economy and language was taken for granted by the imperial authorities and shaped attitudes among the entire population of each colony. In decolonial times these attitudes persist, and constitute an obstacle for the governments of emerging decolonial states when they attempt to develop a language regime that responds to their decolonial realities rather than perpetuating the colonial heritage. Not only the languages themselves, but also the status and function of creoles in society "are a direct result of the prototypical circumstances of [creole] formation, namely the colonial expansion of several European nation-states from the 15th Century onwards" (Migge, Léglise, & Bartens, 2010, p. 3). Rather than working towards inclusive societal practice and emancipation, "the linguistic and discursive practices that came to be associated with European colonial rule [...] played an instrumental role in assigning low prestige to non-European languages and cultures, including cultural and linguistic forms that emerged due to the European expansion, and in establishing the superiority of the coloniser's language and culture" (Migge & Léglise, 2007, p. 297). This not only applied to the creoles that became the home languages for many in these colonies, but also to the varieties of the colonizer's language that emerged in the colonies. Tollefson and Tsui (Tollefson & Tsui, 2018, p. 260) point out that in the colonial period "the colonial language was often adopted as the main MOI [Medium of Instruction], although indigenous languages were sometimes used when authorities believed they would be useful in preparing a loyal

workforce." The asymmetric power relations that result from this state of affairs cannot be underestimated as "Language emphasizes the colonial claim of superiority and righteousness. By making these languages the primary or *only* means of speech and expression for the colonized, the colonists simultaneously made these language habits, which are passed off as inherent valuations, the only means by which the colonized understand themselves" (Ravishankar, 2020, p. 2). These inherent colonial valuations led to the normalization of practices that discard the home languages of the people as inferior. Frantz Fanon, among others, complained that "the children of Martinique are taught to scorn the dialect. Some families completely forbid the use of Creole, and mothers ridicule their children for using it." (Fanon, 2008, p. 10)

The consequences of these practices resonate in the language regimes of the decolonial states in which the home language of the vast majority of the population is a creole that is at least in part the product of asymmetric colonial power relations. In these states the incremental decolonial process of the shift from colonial state traditions and language regimes to decolonial state traditions and language regimes transpires in such a way that the colonial imprint on state traditions and language regimes casts a long and powerful shadow that these newly emerging states try to reconcile with their decolonial realities. These considerations on the colonial imprint and the need for reconciliation with decolonial reality are not only an issue for small island states, but are also recognized to be a global challenge for former colonies,

including those in Africa, that highly affect decolonization processes. “The choice of language and the use to which it is put are central to a people’s definition of itself in relation to its natural and social environment, indeed in relation to the entire universe. Hence language has always been at the heart of the two contending social forces in the Africa of the twentieth century” (Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, 1986, p. 109). These two contending social forces are the empire and the liberation from the empire in the decolonial state, in which language plays a pivotal role for identification and nation development.¹

1.2 Language policy in decolonial Aruba

Sufficient research has been done to demonstrate the weaknesses in the Aruban, and Antillean, educational system that result from the use of Dutch as the language of instruction (Winkel, 1955) (Prins-Winkel A. , 1973) (Prins, 1975) (Prins-Winkel A. , 1983) (Emerencia, 1996), (Narain, 1995) (Esser, 2004), (Caroll, 2009) (Dijkhoff & Pereira, 2010) (Wiel, 2011) (Leuverink, 2012) (Croes R. , 2011) (Sollie, 2015b) (Pereira, 2018) (Mijts, Kester, & Faraclas, 2020). An unfortunate side effect of the phenomena that constitute the focus of these analyses is that pupils, teachers and parents alike lose faith in the educational system and become

¹ The last two paragraphs are based on the upcoming chapter *State traditions and language regimes: language policy choices in a postcolonial framework* in *Language Regimes in Theory and Practice*, edited by Ericka Albaugh, Linda Cardinal and Remi Leger (Mijts, forthcoming)

disenfranchised from it. The same applies to the Dutch-language-dominant legislative and judiciary systems (Bröring & Mijts, 2017), not only because of the language barrier, but also because of the perception of these systems as a foreign force within the Aruban island community.

Language policy and planning, especially in relation to education, in Aruba and the other islands of the former Dutch Antilles has been much talked about and has been the topic of many research projects and policy proposals (see further) by international and local actors. For the past fifty years the discussion on the role of Papiamentu in education and the position of Dutch in governance, education and the judiciary has been the object of much criticism. Little seems to have changed, despite the fact that many advisers and researchers point out the need for a change of policy. Innovative projects that attempt to remedy this situation, such as the Skol Arubano Multilingual (SAM) receive little support and even less attention, and all focus is instead directed toward preparing students for the Dutch final exams. In some cases, this may be a legitimate choice, but the sometimes very disappointing results of Aruban students on those final exams and the relatively small numbers who qualify for inclusion in the HAVO² and VWO³ tracks are indicative of glaring deficits in the educational system. Many have put forward solid arguments for attributing such deficits at least in part to the use of

² Senior general secondary education (Hoger Algemeen Vormend Onderwijs)

³ Pre-university education (Voorbereidend Wetenschappelijk Onderwijs)

Dutch as language of instruction, and have singled out this issue as a prime obstacle for educational success and consequently for socio-economic success and mobility in life.

The situation described above raises one important question: if so much research points towards the shortcomings resulting from the use of Dutch as the language of instruction and if so many policy papers and institutional position papers have been produced to address these shortcomings, why has no substantive, system-wide change been made thus far with regard to the language of instruction? Why have politicians and other prime actors in the development of language policy and planning not heeded the empirical evidence from research, and why have they not taken the decision to implement comprehensive language policy reforms necessary to promote and support the use of the home language of the majority of the population in education, governance and the judiciary?

Making an inventory of the building blocks of these ideologies and reconstructing the architecture are necessary steps, not only in the process of understanding the specific belief systems that drive and perpetuate current language practices in education, but also in the processes of identifying, analyzing and addressing other possible stumbling blocks to decolonization in small island states like Aruba.

1.3 Geopolitical and historical context

Aruba is a small island state of about 180 square kilometers in the Caribbean, located some 30 km north of the coast of Venezuela. Together with Bonaire and Curaçao that lie to the east, Aruba is one of the ABC islands. Since 1986, Aruba gained the status of a constituent country within the Kingdom of the Netherlands, which, since October 10, 2010, consists of a total of four countries: Aruba, Curaçao, the Netherlands and Sint Maarten.

The island was inhabited in pre-Columbian times, with evidence of settlement by Arawakan language speaking Caiquetío Amerindians that had migrated to the island from South America. Reports also confirm a continued presence of Amerindians in early colonial times, however, most were enslaved by the Spanish colonizers of the 16th century, who sent them away to work in other Spanish territories. Due to the dry climate that prevails in Aruba, sugar plantations were never established on the island. In 1636 the island fell into Dutch hands, in the same year as Bonaire and two years after Curaçao had been taken over by the Dutch. In the 17th and 18 centuries, the Dutch mainly focused on Curaçao and its natural deep sea harbors, where they established a very lucrative and strategic regional center for the slave trade. Aruba was governed for the Dutch by the Dutch West India Company until 1792. During the Napoleonic wars the British briefly occupied the ABC islands, but in 1816 they were handed back to the Dutch. It was only in the 19th

century that any serious settlement of Aruba began, after gold was found on the island in 1824, leading to an uncontrolled gold rush that still shows its scars in the present-day landscape of Aruba. Gold mining, guano mining, some agriculture and aloe plantations became the backbone of Aruba's economy. In 1848 Aruba and the other islands of the future Netherlands Antilles became part of the newly formed Kingdom of the Netherlands, under the designation of *Curaçao en onderhorigheden (Curaçao and dependencies)*. Up until abolition in 1863, no more than 21% of the island's population was enslaved, with a total of 487 people being registered to be freed that year (Arends, 2015, p. 158). In the first decades of the 20th century population numbers remained low and up to 1924 - the year of the opening of the oil refinery - only 9000 people were living on the island, most of whom had no registered employment (Kelly, 1999). The establishment of the oil industry led to explosive growth of the population by immigration, mainly from anglophone islands of the Caribbean as a labor force for the Eagle refinery near Oranjestad, and the Lago refinery in San Nicolas. While the population in 1924 was just over 9.000, this doubled to almost 19.000 in 1934, almost 40.000 in 1944 and in 1985, the year of the closure of the Lago refinery, the island's population had reached more than 60.000 (Ridderstaat, 2008, p. 264). Oil refining did not only bring about a population boom, it also shifted the Aruban economy from one of the least to one of the most affluent of the region, as the American refineries brought with them the money, commodities and lifestyles of modernity, along with the tensions that come about with

rapid growth and migration (Ridderstaat, 2008, pp. 180-207) as well as the reinforcement of a "foreign is better mentality" (Ridderstaat, 2008, p. 183). As the language of the Aruban oil refineries was English, most of the refinery related migration came from the English-speaking Caribbean, leading to a substantial proportion of the present-day population, 8 percent, speaking Caribbean varieties of English and/or Caribbean English lexifier creoles.

1954 heralded the end of formal colonization for the territories which up until then had been administered as Curaçao and dependencies: following the violent and successful struggle for independence from the Netherlands in Indonesia (1945-1949) the Netherlands redrafted the structure of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and instituted the *Charter for the Kingdom of the Netherlands*, in which a new state was created that consisted of three countries: Suriname, the Netherlands and the Netherlands Antilles. Surinam left the Kingdom in 1975 and Aruba seceded from the Netherlands Antilles in 1986 after relations within the Netherlands Antilles had become very strained. Aruba received a so-called *Status Aparte* as a country within the Kingdom of the Netherlands and would become fully autonomous in 1996. Simultaneously, oil refining was becoming a less reliable source of income for the island. The Lago refinery closed down on the eve of *Status Aparte* on March 31, 1985, and was re-opened more than five years later, leaving Aruba in a complex economic crisis. Thereafter, the economic focus shifted to tourism, a choice that resulted in the rapid growth of a booming tourism

industry that presently is the main source of income in Aruba. In 1993 the decision that should have led to Aruba's independence in 1996 was reverted during the so-called *Toekomstconferentie* on the future of the Netherlands Antilles (Alofs, 2011). On October 10, 2010, the Netherlands Antilles formally dissolved and the latest version of the Kingdom of the Netherlands now consists of four countries, in alphabetical order: Aruba, Curaçao, Sint Maarten and The Netherlands.

Aruba's history of colonization and economic development has resulted in a rich and heterogeneous ethnic and linguistic melting pot in which four languages play a dominant role in different domains of language use. A majority of the Aruban born population speak Papiamentu, Dutch, English and Spanish. All four languages can be considered to be dominant languages: Papiamentu is an official language and the home language of 68% of the population of the island; Dutch – home language of six percent of the population – is the other official language and the dominant language of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to which Aruba belongs; English – spoken as a home language by 8 percent – is the dominant language of tourism, the predominant industry in Aruba; and Spanish – spoken as home language by 14 percent – is the language of nearby Venezuela and Colombia, and as such it is the regionally dominant language (Mijts and Waterman, 2016).

Time and again in Aruba, just as is the case in many other decolonial states, the critical junctures that are historically recognized as the markers of decolonial state formation have not led to decisions that

favor the mother tongue of the majority of the population over Dutch (Winkel, 1955) (Prins-Winkel, 1973), (Dijkhoff and Pereira, 2010) (Mijts, 2014) (Mijts, 2015). Papiamentu is one of the two official languages of Aruba, next to Dutch. Before 2003, Dutch was the only official language in Aruba, but since 2003, both languages have official status. This status of Papiamentu is uncritically acclaimed as Papiamentu having the same legal status as Dutch and as such having full legal recognition. As will be demonstrated in chapter 4, this is not the case.

1.4 Language policy and planning in a political and legal perspective: Aruba within the Kingdom of the Netherlands

For a better understanding of present-day language policy and planning (LPP) in the Caribbean countries and territories of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, some information has to be provided on the quasi-federal structure of the Kingdom⁴. The Kingdom consists of four countries: the Caribbean countries of Aruba, Curaçao and St Maarten, and the Country of the Netherlands. It is important to bear in mind that the Country of the Netherlands is just one of the four countries of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The three Caribbean countries are relatively small: they

⁴ This section is based upon Bröring, H., and Mijts, E. (2017). Language planning and policy, law and (post)colonial relations in small Island States: a case study. *Social Inclusion*, 5(4), 29–37

have only 38.000 (St Maarten), 112.000 (Aruba) and 156.000 (Curaçao) inhabitants (Bureau of Statistics Sint Maarten, 2015, p. 4), (CBS Aruba, 2020) (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2021); the Country of the Netherlands has 17.500.000 inhabitants (CBS , 2021). Since 2010, when a restructuring within the Kingdom took place (the country of the Netherlands Antilles was dismantled), the much smaller islands Bonaire, Statia and Saba, with 22.000, 3600 and 1800 inhabitants respectively (CBS, 2021), became part of the Country of the Netherlands.⁵ Therefore the country of the Netherlands has a European part as well as a Caribbean part, the so-called Caribbean territories.⁶ The relations between the three Caribbean countries and the country of the Netherlands are complicated for a variety of reasons that will be examined below. The relations between the European part of the Netherlands and the Caribbean territories are complicated too.

The constitutional make-up and powers of the Kingdom of the Netherlands are laid down in the Charter of the Kingdom. This Charter qualifies the principal authorities of the Country of the Netherlands, namely the King, the Parliament, the government and the Council of

⁵ Being realistic, not disrespectful: as left-overs, since it became clear that the Antilles would fall apart.

⁶ The Kingdom of the Netherlands is a member of the European Union. Nevertheless, European law is only fully applicable in the continental European part of the Kingdom. Since the beginning of the European Union, all Caribbean islands have had Overseas Countries and Territories (OCT) status. Today they still have this status. At the same time the people of the OCTs of the Kingdom have European citizenship.

State, as authorities of the entire Kingdom, some of them supplemented with members from the Caribbean countries. This implies that constitutionally the position of the Country of the Netherlands is very dominant: there is a de facto and legally anchored *imbalance* in power between the Country of the Netherlands and the Caribbean countries.⁷ Part of the explanation for this is the big difference in demographic, geographical, institutional and economic size between the Country of the Netherlands and the Caribbean countries. Left out of these justifications, but of at least equal importance, is the fact that the history of Dutch colonial rule and political dominance in the Caribbean countries has constituted the basis for this imbalance.

On the other hand the competencies of the Kingdom are narrow.⁸ It is clear that LPP is legally considered to be a country level issue, not a concern for the Kingdom. Only when it is evident that treaty law or a fundamental principle such as accessibility to law, legal certainty or the equality principle is violated, the Kingdom is permitted to apply its competency. Such principles are violated when it appears that, as a consequence of insufficient language provisions, groups of people are excluded from (information about) social aid or licenses, for example. However, in the Caribbean countries there is no tradition of (empirical self-) evaluation. Research based indications that the current LPP

⁷ And between the European part and the Caribbean territories of the Country of the Netherlands.

⁸ See Article 3 of the Charter.

situation represents an urgent problem of legal exclusion of groups of people are weak. Contrary to criminal law procedures, where specific minimum guarantees are applicable, this is especially true for governance, public administration, civil law procedures and education.

Even if there is a hidden problem, there is no motive for the Kingdom to intervene on the basis of the Charter for the Kingdom of the Netherlands. As stated above, only when a Caribbean country infringes treaty law or fundamental legal principles does the Kingdom have the competency to intervene. The intervention competencies are stipulated in art. 44, 50 and 51 of the Charter. According to article 44 the Kingdom government has the authority to disapprove state ordinances with respect to human rights, the authorities of the Governor, the competencies of the representative bodies of the countries and the judiciary. In article 50 the Kingdom government is given the competency to suspend or annul legislative or administrative measures and article 51 states that if the Caribbean countries do not implement an obligation that derives from the Charter, international regulations or Kingdom acts, the Kingdom government can impose a general Kingdom measure (Bakhuis, 2020, pp. 260-261). It is important to note that, according to Article 50 of the Charter, it is only when a *Caribbean* country violates such a norm that the Kingdom's competency to intervene is applicable. In case of violation by the Country of the Netherlands, the Kingdom has no competency to intervene. This can be seen as an expression of the big overlap between

the Kingdom and the Country of the Netherlands.⁹ As long as Caribbean LPP is not seen as a matter concerning human rights or as a matter of an international regulatory nature, it is unlikely that the Kingdom will legally interfere with Caribbean LPP.

The second reason for the complexity of the relations within the Kingdom, especially with respect to the country of the Netherlands, is the colonial history of the Kingdom, which involved centuries of Dutch colonial rule and political dominance. It goes without saying that the colonial period left its marks, or more precisely, its scars on all of those involved. As a result, the Kingdom (officially the Kingdom's government, in practice the Dutch government) appears to be reluctant to intervene in the Caribbean countries, especially where culture and languages are at stake. With respect to LPP, the present-day Kingdom has never officially intervened and no discussion to do so has ever arisen.

Certainly another result of colonial history is the dominance of the Dutch language (although a minority language) in Caribbean legislation, governance, judiciary and education. The legislation of the Caribbean countries states that Dutch and Papiamentu (Aruba)¹⁰, Dutch,

9 Cf. Santos do Nascimento 2017, p. 287. Santos do Nascimento concludes that the Kingdom of the Netherlands is still a colonial state

10 Article 2 Landsverordening officiële talen Aruba.

Papiamento and English (Curaçao)¹¹ or Dutch and English (St Maarten)¹² are the official languages.¹³ Caribbean legislation is always in Dutch.¹⁴ The predominant role of Dutch is not only a residue of colonial times. Even today there are intelligible explanations for this role of Dutch, at least where legislation and the judiciary are at stake. Regarding *legislation* it must be recognized that the law of the three Caribbean countries is strongly inspired by the law of the European Netherlands: Dutch laws from The Hague (the seat of the Dutch government) more often than not resurface as *legal transplants* in the Caribbean. To put it briefly, legislation of the three Caribbean countries is usually a version of previous Dutch legislation.

It is rather evident that LPP in the Caribbean countries and territories of the Kingdom of the Netherlands still exhibits prominent colonial features, despite the fact that LPP is a responsibility of the (autonomous) countries of the Kingdom, not a task of the Kingdom. Moreover, the Kingdom is not subject to any legal limitations or obstacles to changes in LPP which favor a shift to a stronger position for Papiamento or English (and Spanish) in

11 Article 2 Landsverordening officiële talen Curaçao.

12 Article 1 lid 2 Staatsregeling Sint Maarten; article 2 Landsverordening officiële talen Sint Maarten.

13 In the territories Bonaire, Statia and Saba, which are a part of the Country of the Netherlands the official language is Dutch and Papiamento (Bonaire) or Dutch and English (Statia, Saba). See Invoeringswet BES hoofdstuk 2b, 'De taal in het bestuurlijk verkeer'.

14 Whereas the discussion in Parliament about this legislation is in Papiamento or English.

the Caribbean. One might therefore easily jump to the conclusion that such a change is not only desirable and necessary, but also eminently achievable. Unfortunately, however, the situation is not that simple, because such a change must first run the gauntlet of a range of diverse concerns and considerations on implications for the future of the Kingdom.

Practical concerns are, among others, the need for more interpreters, the availability of law literature and study materials about the law of the Caribbean countries in Papiamentu or English, and financial aspects. A practical and essential concern is how to organize an independent and impartial judiciary where the role of Dutch judges possibly comes under pressure when these judges have to switch over to Papiamentu (regarding English this particular problem probably can be overcome). In the Caribbean countries and territories the need for judges from the European part of the country of the Netherlands is generally accepted. The acceptance of this need is rooted in the idea that the Caribbean countries and territories of the Kingdom of the Netherlands are small scale societies and as a consequence, in general it would be difficult to suppress partiality and nepotism. Caribbean people are aware of this. Although they complain about the dominance of judges from the European part of the country of Netherlands, most of them accept the necessity of these impartial and independent judges for the sake of the Rule of Law and the economy, in particular the tourism sector. This also applies to an important dimension of governance, namely oversight,

where co-operation between supervisory authorities of different countries of the Kingdom is generally appreciated.

In the long run the development of Caribbean law systems in Papiamentu or English within the Kingdom of the Netherlands can reduce co-operation in the field of governance (supervision) and the judiciary. That could have as a consequence that the concordance principle could be violated. The concordance principle is established in article 39 of the Charter for the Kingdom of the Netherlands, which says that in all countries of the Kingdom private, criminal and other law (mainly administrative) law must be formulated and administered in a similar manner. So there is a legally binding mandate for convergence; legal matters should be as much as possible regulated in the same way in all the countries of the Kingdom. Caribbean law can be seen as a set of legal transplants from Dutch law and the participation of Dutch judges in the Caribbean judiciary has played a pivotal role in ensuring compliance with the concordance-principle. It may be that the concordance principle and the colonial legacy connected with this principle are among the greatest obstacles for changes in LPP. Leaving the concordance principle and these ideas behind may conjure up an image of four (autonomous) countries drifting apart, with an uncertain future for the Kingdom itself.

Chapter 2: Theory and methods

The first section of this chapter describes current perspectives on the nature of language policy, its scope, its goals, its outcomes, be they inclusive or exclusive, and the way in which the understanding of language policy draws on understandings of sociolinguistics, law, political science, sociology, educational sciences and governance. The second section contains a theoretical reflection on the relation between language and ideology. The third section focuses on the structural nature of the use of the former colonizer's language regime in decolonial settings on the basis of path dependency. The fourth section articulates a decolonial reflection on the top-down, north south, colonial direction of research and the consequences of that for the acceptability of research findings in decolonial states. The fifth section consists of a description of the methods used in this project and the sixth and final section contains an overview of the data sets that were compiled and analyzed for this research.

There are a number of terminological and critical considerations to be taken into account when studying questions of language, law and policy in the small island states which constitute the focus of the present work. For example, basic binary descriptors, like minority/majority languages, regional/national languages, or the concept of dominance of languages

have to be used with caution. Traditional monolingual approaches to the study of these *de facto* multilingual societies tend not to yield interesting results, because they neglect the important fact that the majority language of these societies is not the colonial heritage language which is usually a language that is foreign to the vast majority of the population. It is often the case that language legislation in these decolonial semi-autonomous states ostensibly attempts to consolidate the position of the majority languages of their citizenry, but in its formulation it actually reinforces the dominance of the former colonizer's language which is a minority language in most of these countries.

2.1 What is the nature of language policy?

This study focuses on the development of language policy in three domains: education, governance and the judiciary/law. This is not meant to imply that my study work strictly limits itself to the use of language in these three domains as these are by nature interrelated with all domains of language use. Addressing questions about language policy and practice implies addressing the struggles of social, political and economic well-being, but also of societal, political and other change. (Tollefson, 2013, p. 4) In order to understand policymaking processes related to language policies in education, it is imperative that the crucial connections between policy and ideology be explored, alongside constraints on policy alternatives, and the socially constructed

meanings of specific policies and practices (Tollefson, 2013, pp. 3-4). Before we can undertake these tasks, we need to understand what language policy is.

In the following paragraphs, three approaches to the concept of language policy will be explored, starting with a model that represents Spolsky's conceptual decomposition of language policy into *ecology*, *ideology* and *planning* (Spolsky, 2004). This is followed by an approach represented by a model of the ideological and pragmatic interdependency between language policy and language practice at the individual and institutional levels of language use (Mijts, 2018). Relying on Grin and Gazzola (2010), the third approach is depicted by a model that presents the domain-specific nature of arguments in the political debate on language policy (LP). Combining these three models allows us to understand language policy from multiple perspectives and to position utterances about LP in the formal and informal political debate.

“Language policy is all about choices” (Spolsky, 2009, p. 1). But to account for the choices made by individual speakers on the basis of rule-governed patterns recognized by the speech community (or communities) of which they are members, one needs a theory of language policy (Spolsky, 2009, p. 1) Over the past decades, different models have been devised in order to get a grasp on the complexity of the study of language policy. These models focus on a number of factors, including the multilayered character of language policy (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996), the diversity of domains (Fishman, 1972) to which

language policy can be applicable (Spolsky, 2009), and the complex nature of language policy in itself as an interaction of language practices, language ideologies and language management, as depicted in the model in Figure 1 (Spolsky, 2004, pp. 7-15). The creation of policy on all levels is consciously and unconsciously informed by ideologies, evaluations, research, media, linguistic landscapes and consultancy (Shohamy, 2006). Language planning and policy (LPP) in itself is a multilayered phenomenon that can be studied on micro, meso and macro levels (Van der Aa, 2009) as it has bottom-up and top-down (Hornberger, 1996), as well as global and local (Canagarajah, 2005), overt and covert (Schiffman, 1996) as well as de jure and de facto forms. (Shohamy, 2006)

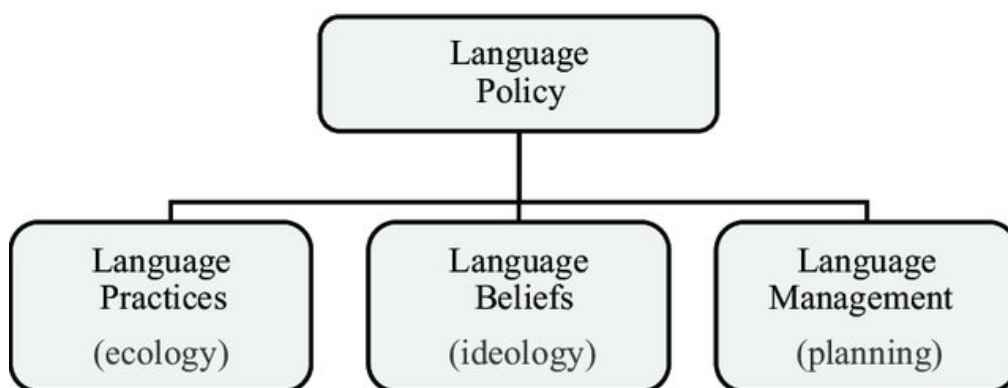


Figure 1 A model of language policy adapted from Spolsky (2004, pp. 5-10) Source: Shohamy (2006, p. 53)

As presented by Shohamy (2006, p. 53), Spolsky (2004) organizes language policy into three components: language practices (ecology),

language beliefs (ideology) and language management (planning). In doing so, he approaches the complexity of language policy as an interplay between different constituents that result in *de facto* language policies. The distinctions between practice, beliefs and management of languages expose multiple layers in the functions and roles of language policy in society beyond the mere management of linguistic resources.

Spolsky's notion of "ecology" goes beyond specific "language practices". When referring to language practices he includes "the sum of the sound, word and grammatical choices that an individual speaker makes, sometimes consciously and sometimes less consciously, that makes up the conventional unmarked pattern of a variety of a language. [...] In multilingual societies, they also include rules for the appropriacy of each named language" (Spolsky, 2004, p. 9). When talking about ecology and language practices, the concept of ecology is broader in Spolsky's approach, as "language policy exists within a complex set of social, political, economic, demographic, educational and cultural factors that make up the full ecology of human life" (2004, p. ix). It is the understanding of that complexity of "non-linguistic factors" that is necessary to "account for any attempt by persons or groups to intervene in the language practices and beliefs of other persons or groups" (Spolsky, 2004, p. 6). In line with the concept that language policy is not only about language but about the speakers of a language as well, Spolsky argues that "It is changes in society that affect linguistic diversity, so that it is social policy rather than language policy that is

needed to maintain it" (2004, p. 8). In relation to language beliefs and ideologies, Spolsky stipulates that speech communities have such as a shared "general set of beliefs about appropriate language practices, sometimes forming a consensual ideology, assigning values and prestige to various aspects of the language variety used in it" (p. 14). Contrasting language ideology with language practices, he states: "language ideology is language policy with the manager left out, what people think should be done. Language practices, on the other hand, are what people actually do" (p. 14).

Language management goes beyond these practices and ideologies, to what Robert Cooper sums up as "*who plans what for whom and how*" (1989, p. 31) in his attempt to provide "a fuller notion of the nature of language management and how it should be differentiated from the general practices and beliefs it is usually *intended to modify*" [my italics]. (p. 14)

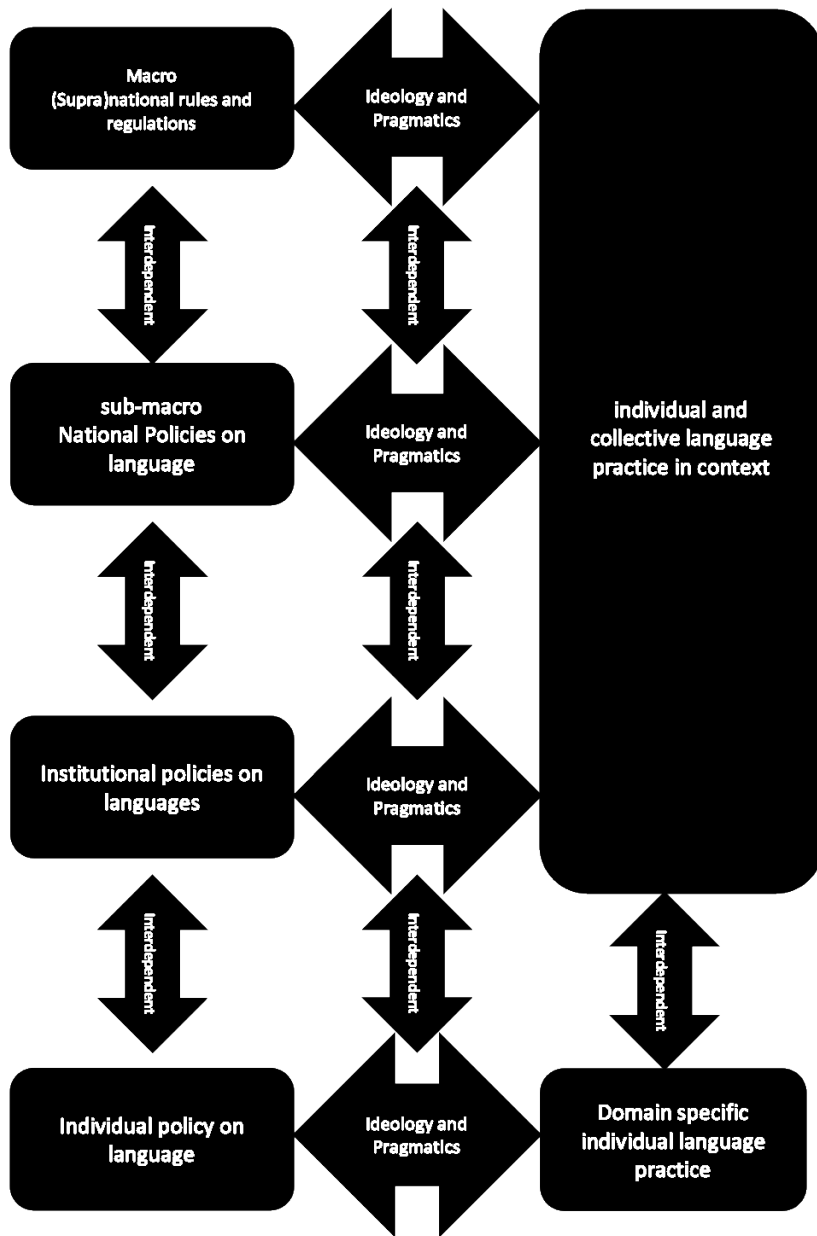


Figure 2 Interdependency of language policy at all levels (Mijts 2018)

The model depicted in figure 2 is a representation of the multilayered character of language policy as formulated by the present author at the conference *Home Languages and Higher Education* at the University of Aruba (Mijts, 2018). The (supra) national rules and regulations, including treaties and policies of supranational or international institutions are the broadest level of language policy. These policies influence and are influenced by national policies and legislation concerning language. These national policies in turn influence and are influenced by institutional policies, for example, the policies of schools, courts, governmental offices, etc. Individuals working in and with these institutions will yet again have their own policies and personal guidelines with respect to language use that finally translate into individual practices. Language policy originates in the interaction among all of these layers.

Not only do the multilayered character of language policy and the complexity of the interplay of different forces in language policy play important roles, but according to Spolsky (2009) the study of language policy requires us also to keep in mind that language policy is domain-related or domain dependent. Individuals belong to (sub) groups in society and these groups have specific language practices and language beliefs. “The members of a domain or speech network share values that they assign to recognizable languages, varieties, and variants, but individuals function within several domains, as they are members of more than one network” (Spolsky, 2009, pp. 249 - 250). As such, when

reflecting upon language policy and practice, a given individual's understanding will be informed by the domains and speech networks that they are a part of. That said, these representations of the individual's understanding of language policy and practice may shift among the domains and networks that they identify with.

A third approach depicted in Figure 3 is based on Grin and Gazzola (2010) and constitutes a model for language policy evaluation (before and after implementation). This model provides insight into the different criteria on the basis of which evaluation and assessment of language policies can be done. Grin and Gazzola identify five types of arguments provided in political debates on language policy: legal, economic, political, cultural and philosophical. These arguments feed wider political debate on *why* language policies are necessary, on *what* objectives and constraints should define these policies and on *how* the language policies might be implemented. Their framework for understanding resource allocation for the achievement of the goals that are set in language policy include variables of a financial, human, material, organizational and regulatory nature, all of which must be considered in the process of policy implementation (Grin & Gazzola, 2010).

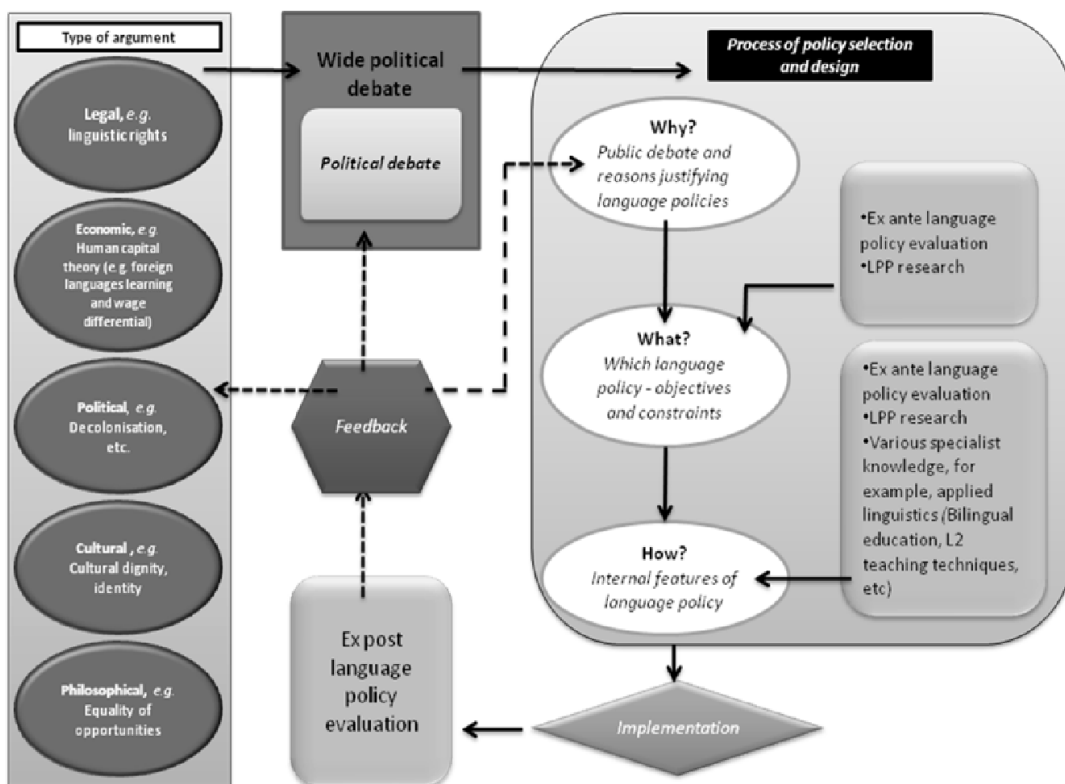


Figure 3: Interacting arguments that shape the political debate concerning LP (Black and white rendering of original in Grin and Gazzola (2010, p. 13))

The first type of argument that Grin and Gazzola identify is of a legal nature, including but not limited to questions of linguistic rights. Linguistic rights are rights of individuals and groups that can be subdivided in core rights and ancillary rights, in which core rights are:

the right to speak one's language, or, more precisely, the language of one's choice. The core right is, or can be,

accompanied by a series of ancillary rights without which the right to speak a language becomes less valuable for its beneficiaries, such as: the right to be understood by others (for example, by public authorities), the right to a translation or and interpretation from other languages (for example, in the course of a meeting or trial at which those other languages are spoken), the right to compel others to speak one's language, and the right to learn the language. (Mancini & de Witte, 2008, p. 248).

The second type of arguments is based on economic concerns. This kind of argument includes considerations on the added value of foreign language learning, and the valuation of the subsequent language skills for human capital. This added value is relative, because in predominantly monolingual Anglo-Saxon and continental European economies the values of additional language skills are higher than the values of added language skills in multilingual societies in which non-native proficiency of the colonial language is considered to be a disadvantage. A third type of argument is of a political nature and includes the role of languages in decolonization. The political debate does not only focus on the linguistic *human* rights of individuals and groups, but also on the safeguarding and promotion of certain languages for either geopolitical or cultural motives. The argumentation for the use and promotion of languages in these cases revolves around political and territorial cohesion as well as political and historical oppositions. A fourth category consists of cultural arguments, including

those which center cultural dignity and identity, but one could imagine cultural identification, diversity and intangible cultural heritage to be of key importance in the political argumentation as well. Finally, a fifth category is constituted by arguments of a philosophical nature, including equality of opportunities not only on an individual basis but also at group level and even at a global geopolitical level.

Each of the three models presented in the previous paragraphs have their advantages and disadvantages when it comes to allowing for an understanding of the underlying processes that shape language policy: Spolsky's conceptual decomposition of language policy into *ecology*, *ideology* and *planning* serves us very well to build an understanding of the interconnectedness between the different components of language policy, but does little to provide us with any grasp on the way in which these components develop institutionally. The model presented by Mijts (2018) provides insight into the multitude of and interconnectedness among the hierarchical layers that are involved in the development and implementation of language policies and the way in which these shape the individual and collective language practices in context, yet, this model does not shed much light on the decision making process itself. Finally the model presented by Grin and Gazzola (2010) provides insight into the way in which the political decision making process for language policy leads to policy outcomes, however, this model largely ignores the hierarchical interdependencies of that process. It is only through combination of the three models that one can develop a more

comprehensive understanding of the underlying factors, relationships, tensions and nuances of the process of language policy development and implementation.

2.2 Ideology in language use

"Among early scholars, it was widely believed that technical expertise should be the basis for making [...] language policy decisions. Individual learners and communities were rarely consulted, or were the focus of attention mainly when they created difficulties for the implementation of state policies" (Tollefson, 2013, p. 26). This approach that focuses on the policy makers and on the institutional formulation and implementation of policies strongly contrasts with the present-day understanding that language policy development would be "*public* process[es], of the working out of policies through everyday practices within communities" (Tollefson, 2013, p. 28). Following Swales (1990), Tollefson (2013, p. 28) emphasizes that these communities are also communities of discourse. These communities of discourse have broadly agreed common public goals, and use communication to achieve those goals (Swales, 2017). It is within this dichotomy between top-down and bottom-up mechanisms that the contrasting and often covert ideologies that emanate from the communities of discourse are decisive in the development, implementation and reception of language policies. In this dichotomy critical linguistics can contribute in a positive way by "understanding the process by which social, economic, and political

inequalities are created, masked, and sustained, as well as how language policies may undermine hierarchical systems and offer instead a wider range of life options for speakers of all language varieties" (Tollefson, 2013, p. 30). If language policies are designed to benefit the wellbeing of the individuals and communities that these language policies govern, the extent to which "language communities participate in the design and implementation of their own language provisions" can be some of "the most important considerations in the success or failure" of these policies (Stroud, 2010, p. 339). In decolonial settings, "in the majority of cases, [...] linguistic discourses were taken over wholesale from the colonial project" (Stroud, 2009, p. 510) Therefore, understanding and incorporating the language beliefs of individuals and communities through the study of that discourse is crucial in the design and implementation of successful emancipatory mother tongue programs and policies.

I hope to have made clear, in the above, that language beliefs and ideologies are a fundamental component of understanding of the development, implementation, effect and reception of language policy. Potential changes and real changes in language policy elicit responses from discourse communities that make these ideologies surface in the public debate, and this is particularly evident in the Dutch Caribbean. Many of the examples of the contributions to the discussions on change in language policy in the Dutch Caribbean that are provided in this study reflect disbelief in, lack of understanding about and/or rejection of

change on the basis of the presumed normality of traditional colonial approaches to language and society. From the perspective of someone who has limited lived experience in the Dutch Caribbean, many of these contributions may seem far fetched, contradictory or confusing. As the state of affairs before any proposed change in policy and practice has usually become *normalized*, arguments against such change are often framed in terms of defending what is perceived as "normal".

Verschueren (2012) describes this as "once ways of thinking about relations between groups of people are felt to be "normal", they may become powerful tools for legitimating attitudes, behavior, and policies, whatever the frequently negative consequences in terms of discrimination, patterns of dominance, and even violence." (p. 2).

One can apply the same perspective to debates about the respective positions and roles of languages and their users in specific domains of language use such as education, governance and judiciary in the Dutch Caribbean. Centuries of colonialization have promoted and reproduced discursive traditions in which the languages of the majorities of the Caribbean populations have been not only framed as incomplete, inadequate, vulgar or simple, but also designated as *local vernaculars* in contrast to the *global* European Dutch language. This, as I will show in this dissertation, has in turn fostered discourses that normalize the use of Dutch in education and other domains of society at the expense of the majority languages of the Dutch Caribbean and their speakers. Despite 65 years of documentation and research on the exclusive nature

of the institutional use of Dutch in these societies, the presumed normality of the use of that language is still strongly present in Dutch Caribbean political, legal and social discourse.

Language policies that favor Dutch over the other languages have remained in effect in the small island territories of the Dutch Caribbean even though research has demonstrated that these policies have had strongly negative effects on fundamental processes of emancipation and inclusive socio-economic wellbeing of their populations. Colonial discourse on the status and role of languages remains a fundamental obstacle to the implementation of more inclusive policy alternatives that acknowledge and valorize the actual linguistic competencies of the populations of the islands, rather than the idealized linguistic competencies artificially imposed on these same populations by the former colonizer. To put it more simple, the persistence of colonial discursive traditions continues to create barriers along the path of emancipation of the speakers of Papiamentu by perpetuating the view that Dutch is a superior language that is uniquely and "naturally" fit for education, the law and the Kingdom. As "the details of a story matter less than the way in which it is told and the overall message it carries" (Verschueren, 2012, p. 195), LPP advocates who recognize and promote the use of the languages of the populations of these territories have been fighting an uphill battle, as their story is one that contradicts ingrained beliefs on languages and society. The use of Dutch is believed to be *normal*, *self-evident* and *obvious* because of the historical and

political colonial ties to the Netherlands, whereas the introduction of policy and practice designed to build and realize inclusive benefits of the use of English or Papiamentu must constantly be demonstrated, proven and defended. In this debate, the justification for change based on advice from international organizations, studies by renowned researchers and data from statistical agencies, are vigorously countered by gratuitous justifications of the status quo and a belittling of the *local* or *regional* character of the challenges that need to be addressed.

In the process of coming to terms with the decolonial realities in Aruba, pro-change LPP discourse is replacing traditional colonial beliefs and interpretation frames about the position of languages in society with more globally accepted beliefs and interpretation frames that promote the role of home languages in education. "In order for individuals to want to adopt another language or language variety, they must be dissatisfied with their socioeconomic status and confident that their lives will improve as a result of the new language behavior" (Scotton, 1982, p. 85). Change in language policy can in this respect be seen as change in the way in which language varieties and languages are selected and adopted on the basis of a perceived opportunity for the improvement of the wellbeing of an individual or group. The continued colonial framing of Dutch as the monolingual ideal is counterproductive to change. It is not until the "meaning patterns and interpretation frames [...], have been replaced by new ones that need to be examined and constantly monitored" (Verschueren, 2012, p. 195) that the

introduction of the languages of the majorities of the people of the Dutch Caribbean can become a stable and consistent driver for emancipation. Critical junctures or critical incidents often result in a major shift in the way a given story is told, thus replacing obsolete meaning patterns and interpretation frames. The history of resistance to more inclusive LPP in Aruba demonstrates that such critical junctures have not yet taken place, or have not been recognized as such. However, such recognition is fundamental in achieving change in which the acknowledgement of the role of language in emancipation and decolonization leads to the mobilization of political and governmental support.

It is vital to "see ideology not only in relation to grand political issues, but as much in relation to the working of institutions and small scale 'local' contexts of practice. There are reasons to believe, moreover, that there are paradigms of thinking that provide continuity between the grand or global and the local." (Verschuere, 2012, p. 198) This understanding of the nexus between the global and the local is particularly relevant to the challenge of positioning and framing the discourse on LPP in the Dutch Caribbean. The dominant discourses in the European part of the Kingdom depart from the framework of a *metropole* that studies, supports and feeds the Caribbean *periphery*, whereas in the Caribbean parts of the kingdom the dominant discourses alternate between that Eurocentric perspective and a pluricentric

perspective of multiple autonomous entities that strive for decolonization, emancipation and democratization.

Building on Spolsky's conceptual decomposition of language policy as a combination of language practices (ecology), language beliefs (ideology) and language management (planning) (Spolsky, 2004), and his conviction that "the real language policy of a community is more likely to be found in its practices than in management" (Spolsky, 2004, p. 222), one should not study LPP in any society without studying the voices that (re)present the beliefs of language users in that particular society. Shohamy adds that "even the most multilingual declared policies do not always reflect the de facto and real LP's, as these provide only lip service, declarations and intentions" (Shohamy, 2006, p. 52) and that we have to study the "different mechanism that dictate and impose, often covertly and implicitly, the de facto language practices" (Shohamy, 2006, p. 53). Between language ideology and language practice, forces are at work that trigger overt and covert mechanisms that elaborate and perpetuate de facto language policies.

Shohamy (2006), identifies the following five mechanisms that work together as a whole to link ideology to de facto language policy:

1. rules and regulations: language laws, officiality, nationalization, language academies and nationalization laws (Shohamy, 2006, p. 59)

2. language education: Language education policies (LEP) used to create de facto language practices in educational institutions, especially in relation to home languages, second languages and foreign languages (Shohamy, 2006, p. 76)

3. language tests: a powerful tool because they are imposed on all students in all schools, with no way of resisting them and because they are "imposed by groups in power to affect language priorities, language practices and criteria of correctness often leading to inclusion and exclusion and to perpetuate ideologies" (Shohamy, 2006, p. 93)

4. language in public space: the presence (or absence) of language displays in the public space communicates a message, intentional or not, conscious or not, that affects, manipulates or imposes de facto language policy and practice (Shohamy, 2006, p. 110)

5. the conglomerate of ideology, myths, propaganda and coercion which occurs in the public and private dialogue on all levels and through all media. (pp. 57-134).

2.3 State Traditions and Language Regimes

The lack of legal acceptance and promotion of creole languages and home languages in decolonizing Caribbean and Pacific island states as well as in other decolonizing areas is emblematic of the continued

dominance of the languages of the former colonizer. In many cases, even though the vast majority of the population of these countries does not speak the language of the former colonizer as a home language, that language is chosen and maintained as one of the official languages or sometimes as the sole official language. The home languages often do not receive official status, and if they do, that status is often primarily symbolic.

Decolonial small island states¹⁵ face special challenges in the development of language policy and planning for education, government and the law. These challenges are often similar to the ones faced by larger decolonial states, but smaller scale is frequently used as an added excuse to hamper and delay the development and implementation of policies that fit the needs of small island communities. In most cases, the state tradition of the former colonizer still dictates the language regimes in these decolonial island states. Despite the fact that decades of research have demonstrated the inadequateness of these adopted practices and frameworks, governments shy away from policy change in favor of inclusivity and instead maintain the exclusive postcolonial status quo. The colonial state tradition is an obstacle for a decolonial approach that favors reciprocity between policy makers and speech communities.

¹⁵ See section 2.4 for an explanation of the use of the term 'decolonial state'

The strength of path dependency in language planning and policy can be demonstrated on the basis of the continuation of state traditions and language regimes in decolonial states that have integrated the former colonizer's language(s) and related language policies in their postcolonial state's governmental, judicial and educational practices. Not all postcolonial states, however, have followed this path. A classic counterexample is the Republic of Indonesia, which adopted Bahasa Indonesia as the national language in 1945, and neither the language of the former colonizer (Dutch), nor the language with most native speakers (Javanese) was chosen as a national language. However, many former colonies, even the largest and most populous, have adopted the language of the former colonizers as well as adopting and implementing language policies that reflect the former colonizer's agendas and frames of reference.

The discrepancies in decolonial small island states between language policies and laws on the one hand and social practice on the ground on the other can often only be explained through a deep understanding of the extent to which language policies in these islands are co-determined by the state tradition and language regimes of the former colonizer (Sonntag & Cardinal, 2015). In the discussion on language policy in small island states, the arguments used in favor of specific languages is likely to be rooted in the former colonizer's frameworks (DeGraff, 2016). This leads to language policies and practices that can only be explained based on the colonial past, and not based on fundamental linguistic

insights on education, governance and inclusive societal development. The monolingual dominance of the former colonizer's language finds its roots in an institutionalized ideology which in turn is nurtured by the language regime adopted from the former colonizer.

While all official language regimes form part of state traditions (Sonntag & Cardinal, 2015), in decolonial states the state tradition and language regime of the former colonizer can be of such strength that an adequate LP for the decolonial state does not materialize or only materializes very slowly, given that the public is generally unaware of the power and manipulative capabilities of affecting *de facto* policies (Shohamy, 2006, p. 54) The severity of the impact of this dynamic is determined to no small degree at the moment of formal decolonization, where the new state can either take a principled decision on a new language policy (e.g. Indonesia where Indonesian was declared the national language in 1945 when it declared independence) or the new state can postpone or avoid the decision on language policy, by default accepting and perpetuating the former colonizer's LP. In the second case, as history has shown, this often leads to LP's that appear to be inadequate and counterproductive for the societies on which they are imposed, as becomes clear from the examples of language use and language planning and policy in Mauritius, Cape Verde and Haiti, eSwatini, Lesotho and Vanuatu provided in chapter three of this book.

As language policies and language regimes follow state traditions and are strongly determined by path dependency (Sonntag & Cardinal,

2015), it is necessary to investigate the way in which state tradition affects decolonial language policy development and how the former colonizer's policies affect those of the former colony. The former colonizer's state tradition inevitably impacts the process of state formation in all of its former colonies. Unless there is a conscious effort to break with that tradition, the continuity from former colonizer to former colony is virtually automatic and unconscious. Due to the close links between most decolonial states and their former colonizers, the former colonizer's language regime still has a substantial impact on the present-day language regime in most decolonial states. In decolonial settings, this influence is also tangible at an institutional level, where the former colonizer's language institutes such as the Académie Française, the British Council, the Instituto Cervantes or the Taalunie are strong actors in the shaping national language regimes in the formerly colonized world.

Some of the most insidious consequences of path dependency become very clear in those decolonizing contexts where some modest attempts have been made to formulate and implement language policies that favor the home languages of the majority of the population. Even these modest initiatives are subject to continuous pressure and erosion from forces that favor the use of the former colonizer's language. For example in the former British colonies in Africa, "path dependency will leave most [mother tongue] programs in place, but their years may be reduced from earlier duration, given several factors: the historical

tainting of "Bantu" education, rising demand for "English-only" teaching from growing groups of wealthy citizens, and the rigid framing of the mother tongue option" (Albaugh, 2014, p. 228). Language in education policies that include the home language in the first years of primary education in many cases do little more than using the home language as scaffolding for better mastery of a European language, either the colonial language or English.

Language policies in education will likely continue to converge to "local language light" – the use of local languages where materials and funding propels it, and only in the early years of education. This will not achieve the maximal benefits – for cultural maintenance or for learning outcomes – but it will protect from widespread language death while leaving space for variation and change. Well-meaning scholars that criticize early-exit programs and insist on late-exit maintenance programs might push governments to scrap the use of local languages entirely rather than expand them. (Albaugh, forthcoming, p. 23)

Perpetuating the belief that the colonial language is superior, these *local language light* policies are not "aggressive programs" that represent a fundamentally decolonizing turn in LPP, but instead are "intended simply to graft on to an existing effort ultimately aimed to teach children a European language" (Albaugh, 2014, p. 228). Advocates for the introduction of a meaningful and comprehensive shift in LPP toward

mother tongue based education more often than not face strong resistance which is deeply rooted in colonial beliefs.

2.4 Decolonizing methodologies

Under the colonial gaze, the ideal language user has been conceptualized as a monolingual, monolectal speaker of a "pure" standardized variety (Hüning & Krämer, 2018, p. 6), the official language of the colonizing power. Language contact has not been seen as a natural phenomenon, with multilingualism being considered as a deviation from the monolingual norm, and language contact being understood as leading to the degeneration or contamination of "pure" language competency (Auer & Wei, 2009, pp. 1-2) in the colonizer's language. "Colonial linguistics was a prominent tool in the colonial project of governmentality" (Stroud, 2009, p. 509). Furthermore "colonial language policies are part and parcel of colonial strategies of governmentality that include, among other things, the social invention of artificial structures of belonging and the imputation of hierarchically stratified values to 'local idioms' in relation to one another" (Abdelhay, Makoni, & Severo, 2020, p. 8). The asymmetries in power relations that result from this can not be underestimated as "(l)anguage emphasizes the colonial claim of superiority and righteousness. By making these languages the primary or only means of speech and expression for the colonized, the colonists simultaneously made these language habits, which are passed off as inherent valuations, the only means by which

the colonized understand themselves” (Ravishankar 2020, p. 2). As such, language policies that favor the former colonizer's language in decolonial states are a colonial construct that ignores the multilingual realities in which language plays a pivotal role for identification and nation development¹⁶.

A decolonial understanding of beliefs and ideologies concerning LPP requires a shift from Eurocentric North-South analysis which focuses on the resolution of *problems for development in developing states* towards a critical pluricentric approach in a *collaborative* and *inclusive* quest for understanding and praxis, while recognizing that colonization is part of the present-day fabric of society and present-day ways of thinking. "The intellectual project of decolonizing has to set out ways to proceed through a colonizing world. It needs a radical compassion that reaches out, that seeks collaboration and that is open to possibilities that can only be imagined as other things fall into place" (Tuhiwai-Smith, 2012, p. xii). She goes on to position the intellectual project of decolonizing as a multifaceted complex project that "situates research in a much larger historical, political and cultural context and then examines its critical nature within those dynamics" (Tuhiwai-Smith, 2012, p. 6) This also forces the investigator to "acknowledge the

¹⁶ The last two paragraphs are based on the upcoming chapter *State traditions and language regimes: language policy choices in a postcolonial framework* in *Language Regimes in Theory and Practice*, edited by Ericka Albaugh, Linda Cardinal and Remi Leger (Mijts, forthcoming)

researcher's position and influence over the beliefs, the perception of truths and other aspects of the discourse and lived realities of the researched community" (Faraclas, Kester, & Mijts, 2019). That researcher cannot disconnect from the wellbeing of the researched community and needs to acknowledge a critical and solution-oriented perspective.

This decolonizing perspective also leads to the terminological considerations that have been introduced at the beginning of this chapter with regards to inadequateness of basic binary descriptors, such as minority/majority languages, regional/national languages, or the concept of dominance of languages. In the shift from monolingual - global Northern - ideologies to multilingual global realities these terms should be used with caution as they often are colonial and institutional labels that categorize languages and their speakers in a hierarchical way.

The use of the terms 'postcolonial', 'decolonizing' and 'decolonial' deserves attention as well, especially in combination with the concept of 'state'. I have personally often used the term 'postcolonial' as an adjective before 'state', however, its use leads people to think that it indicates that coloniality is a thing from the past. Apart from its political interpretation of the end of colonial rule and the achievement of sovereignty, the traditional interpretation of the term postcolonial is contradictory in nature: either a community is fully decolonized and there are no colonial traces, or a community is in the process of decolonization, of shedding the oppressing shadow of colonial rule. If

one interprets the term postcolonial as 'being in a process of decolonization', it provides another perspective. Unfortunately, that perspective is a negative one, as it positions the 'decolonizing state' as being behind, incomplete, catching up or lacking in certain aspects in comparison to 'non-decolonizing states'? This leads me to adopt the term 'decolonial' as a concept that includes the reality of colonization in the fabric of the decolonial state, as such enabling a decolonial discourse of equality and reality, rather than a decolonizing discourse of development and inequality. This perspective provides "a route to agency through decolonial thinking and decolonial transformative being" (Mignolo, 2011, p. ix). Mignolo further goes on to state that the "colonial matrix of power" serves "to build a totality in which everybody would be included, but not everybody would also have the right to include" (2011, p. xv). In a decolonial perspective, that directionality of the right to include is abandoned, and the burden of decolonization and development is shared. The projects of decolonization and development are real, for sure, but these projects are global projects, in which the former colonizers have as much responsibility as the formerly colonized countries, if not more. Adopting a decolonial perspective allows for the development of multidirectional approaches to colonial pasts (Albrecht, 2019), for a new critical perspective in political discourse analysis (Ahmed, 2021), and for ways to see the colonial realities in the present day world (Tsang, 2021); as well as for exploring the interaction between the concepts postcolonial and decolonial (Bhambra, 2014). The use of the concept 'decolonial' throughout this study emphasizes the

potential for an understanding of the multidirectional and pluricentric nature of the so-called postcolonial political relations that allow for a critical analysis that includes present day colonial realities.

2.5 Methods

“A good method is a method that is able to give a satisfactory (reliable, relevant, etc.) answer to the questions of a research project.” (Wodak & Meyer, 2016, p. 3)

Truly emancipatory change in the status and use of non-colonial heritage languages in decolonial states requires “significant modifications in the underlying values and ideologies about the status and role of languages other than English in education and public life” (Ricento, 2005). Such modifications are called for in all situations in which the former colonizer’s language is dominant in education and public life. It is only when changes in underlying values and ideologies are achieved, that truly inclusive policies can be designed, implemented and supported by the community, on the basis of their understanding of the relations between language and inclusive steps toward individual and societal wellbeing. Understanding these belief systems, underlying values and ideologies, requires a critical approach. The meaning of components of discourse can only be understood in the context of the whole, while at the same time, these components of discourse are constitutive of the whole. As such, research design, data collection and

analysis must be cyclic, or "iterative" as many ethnographers have argued (for instance O'Reilly (2008, pp. 13, 22).

In any case, similar to Grounded Theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), data collection is not considered to be a specific phase that must be completed before the analysis can be conducted: after the first data collection one should perform first pilot analysis, find indicators for particular concepts, expand concepts into categories and, on the basis of these first results, collect further data (*theoretical sampling*). In this procedure, data collection is never completely concluded nor excluded, and new questions may always arise that require new data or re-examination of earlier data ((Strauss, 1987) (Strauss & Corbin, 1990)) (Wodak & Meyer, 2016, p. 21).

This approach requires us to conceptualize the present study as an ethnographic investigation in language policy (Canagarajah, 2006) in which data are analyzed through what Reisigl and Wodak call "discourse historical analysis", which involves "uncovering the - particularly latent - persuasive or 'manipulative' character of discursive practices" (Reisigl & Wodak, 2016, p. 25). This conceptualization allows for interpretation of discursive events, drawing on theoretical models, social theory and contextual knowledge from literature and participant observation in order to come to a first-hand thick description of the orientation toward language practices and policy.

Observing patterns of social interaction and the perspectives of participants through extended participant observation and through the study of discourse allows the researcher to develop understandings and hypotheses about human behaviors in a particular context. In this particular study, such an ethnographic approach allows us to uncover grassroots processes that elude the usual procedures involved in official top-down policy formulation and implementation and that can be crucial in unleashing emancipatory language practices.

Ethnography of language policy proves its worth as a method capable of capturing the impact of closing and opening of spaces for schools and communities. Yet the undeniable, undeniably encouraging, and somewhat ubiquitous finding (...) is that language practices in schools and society are not necessarily controlled by top-down policies. Educators and other human beings are not simply cogs in the machine of dominant discourses, the wheels of which are turned by hegemonic language policies - they can agentively interpret, appropriate, and/or ignore such policies in creative ways. (Hornberger & Hult, 2008, p. 285)

In a first phase of this research, a deep understanding of the complexity of the research topic was developed through several cycles of participant observation, interviews and focus group meetings and engagement with policy reform stakeholders. The data set which has been collected for this study includes former research, legislation, policy

texts, print media reader's letters and social media discussions. All these data are considered to be material appropriate for the investigation of discourse in this study as all of them form part of the output of the discourse community under study. The data consists of both unobtrusive and obtrusive primary and secondary data (Auer 1995). Law and policy can be considered to be unobtrusive primary data; while obtrusive primary data include participant observation, since through participation the researcher is part of and co-creates the researched society. Reader's letters, editorials from the print media and written social media discussions are unobtrusive secondary data, while obtrusive secondary data include the pilot interviews and focus groups about practice, planning, policy and ideology. The data has been thematically analyzed "to make power relations explicit that are frequently obfuscated and hidden, and to derive results which are also of practical relevance" (Wodak & Meyer, 2016, p. 19).

Understanding language policy choices requires the study of a diversity of data, and not just language policy documents alone, as

[...] the real LP of a political and social entity should not be observed only through declared policy statements, but rather through a variety of devices that are used to perpetuate language practices, often in covert and implicit ways. Moreover, these devices, which on the surface may not be viewed as policy devices, are strongly affecting the actual policies, given their direct effects on language practice. Thus, it is only through the

observations of the effects of these very devices that the real language policy of an entity can be understood and interpreted. (Shohamy, 2006, p. xvi)

As stated in the previous section, a decolonizing researcher cannot disconnect from the wellbeing of the researched community and needs to dare to acknowledge and adopt critical and praxis-oriented perspectives. The ethnographic approach outlined in the previous paragraphs serves that purpose because

(...) casting an ethnographic eye at language planning at individual, classroom, school, community, regional, national, and global levels can and does serve to uncover the indistinct voices, covert motivations, embedded ideologies, invisible instances, or unintended consequences of LPP as it is created, interpreted, and appropriated in particular contexts. We can expect that the ethnography of language policy will not only continue to prove its worth in illuminating complex language policy processes, but also its value in championing language diversity, multilingual education, and social justice around the world. (Hornberger & Hult, 2008, p. 286)

Here we reiterate the need for critical investigation to incorporate a circular process in which interpretation and analysis will lead to new insights that sometimes not only call for additional data collection, but also for adjustments in both the conceptualization as well as the

underlying theoretical concepts, relations and assumptions of the research. In itself, that circular process is infinite, however, data collection may be considered to be complete when the analysis of the data provides a satisfactory (reliable, relevant, etc.) answer to the questions of a research project.

According to Reisigl and Wodak "a thorough, ideal-typical discourse historical analysis should follow an eight-step program. Typically, the eight steps are implemented recursively" (2016, p. 34) After setting the thematic scope of this project, these eight steps are implemented as follows:

1. The first step involved the activation and consultation of preceding theoretical knowledge, allowing for an understanding of decolonization and discourse in relation to language and language policy as presented in the first, second and third section of this chapter, a contextual study as presented in chapter one and a study on the role of the home language in education and a comparative study on language policy formation in decolonial societies as presented in chapter three.
2. In the second step of this research, data and context information was systematically collected, partly through the execution of interviews and focus groups, and partly through participant observation.

3. Due to the scope of this project, the range of the study has been limited to five genres: legislation, policy texts, research publications, written media contributions (reader's letters and editorials) and social media discussions. For all five genres data sets were created.

4. On the basis of the data and on the basis of our theoretical and contextual understanding of the issues at hand, the research question was specified and a set of assumptions on the underlying beliefs on language in decolonial societies were also formulated as topoi.

5. In the qualitative pilot analyses, discourse from each selected genre was analyzed to test the effectivity of the method. For example one social media discussion was analyzed, including a context analysis, macro-analysis and micro-analysis, in order to test the presence of the topoi and in order to finetune the analytical tool.

6. Subsequently detailed qualitative case studies were performed on the data covered by each of the genres, in which the recurrence of topoi throughout time and across genres was the main indicator from which conclusions were drawn. A selection of these analyses is presented in chapters four and five of this volume.

7. The conclusions emerging from those analyses allowed for the formulation of a text or discourse immanent critique, a socio-diagnostic critique, and a future-related prospective critique, all of which appear in chapter six of this book.

8. These results were then used to inform the development of a more comprehensive approach to language planning in decolonial settings as presented in the conclusions of chapter six.

2.6 Description of the data sets

The data on which this study is based consists of five kinds of data: 1. Legislation that touches upon the use of language; 2. policies on the use of language; 3. research on the use of language; 4. reader's letters on the use of language and finally 5. social media discussions on the use of language. This section contains an inventory of these data sets organized per territorial case study in section 3.3 and organized by data type for Aruba.

The discussion of the reports and research in chapter 3.2 draws on the 1953 UNESCO report *The use of vernacular languages in education*; the 2000 UNESCO *Dakar framework of action*; the 2003 UNESCO *Education in a multilingual world: UNESCO education position paper*; the 2008 UNESCO *Mother tongue matters: local language as a key to effective learning*; the 2012 UNESCO and GIZ *Strengthening of education systems*;

the 2016 UNESCO *Global Education Monitoring Policy Paper 24: If you don't understand, how can you learn?*; and the 2020 UNESCO Report submitted by UNESCO for the 19th session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII). Additional sources are Cummins (1981); Thomas and Collier (1997); Cummins (2000); Thomas and Collier (2002); Dutcher (2004); Heugh, Benson, Bogale, and Yohannes (2007); Pinnock (2009); Young (2009); Migge, Léglise, and Bartens (2010); Walter and Benson (2012); Garcia and Wei (2014); and Collier and Thomas (2017).

Sources used in the country study of Haiti include the constitutions of Haiti of 1805, 1918, 1964, 1983 and 1987 (with amendments up to 2012). Apart from constitutional legislation the study is based on the 1979 *Report on the situation of human rights in Haiti* by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights of the Organization of American States and the UNHRC report titled *Republic of Haiti: Access to judicial remedies in Haiti. Submission to the United Nations Human Rights Council*. Academic literature on Haiti includes Dejean (2010); Hebblethwaite (2012); DeGraff (2016); Marky (2016); Avalos and Augustin (2018).

For the combined country study of Lesotho and eSwatini, sources include the 1993 constitution of Lesotho and the 2005 constitution of eSwatini, as well as the UNICEF report *The impact of language policy and practice on children's learning: Evidence from Eastern and Southern*

Africa by Barbara Trudell (2016); the report by the Swaziland ministry of education and training *Swaziland national curriculum framework for general education* (2018); the Lesotho Bureau of Statistics Lesotho report *Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey: generating evidence to deliver for children* (2019); the Official website for the Kingdom of Lesotho (2020); and the Lesotho Education website (2020). Academic literature includes Kamwangamalu (2013) and Ekanjume-Ilongo (2015).

For the study of Cape Verde the 2010 constitution is used together with Bartens (2001); with further input from Baptista, Brito, and Bangura (2010); Lopes (2011); Baptista (2013); Swolkien (2015); David (2018); and finally the website *Languages in Cabo Verde* (2021).

The study of Mauritius includes the 1968 constitution with amendments through 2016; the 2011 *Housing and Population Census. Volume II: Demographic and Fertility Characteristics* by the Mauritian Central Bureau of Statistics; The 2014 report of the Mauritius Ministry of Education and Human Resources *Education reforms in action 2008 2014: learning for life*; and further draws on Ah-Vee and Collen (2003); Atchia-Emmerich (2005); Rajah-Carrim (2007); Baker and Kriegel (2013); Waldis (2018); Bissonauth-Bedford (2019); and Ekiye (2020).

The study of Vanuatu includes the 1980 constitution with amendments through 2013; the 2012 *Vanuatu national language policy* of the Vanuatu Ministry of Education; with further sources including Country

Watch (2018); Ethnologue (2019); Meyerhof (2013); Early (2015); Charley (2015); and Rawlings (2019).

For Aruba, the national rules and regulations, as well as the supranational Kingdom laws and international treaties that govern the use of language in schools, governance and the judiciary, have been collected and analyzed to provide insight into the enforceable state-sanctioned LPP. The following legal sources have also been analyzed: the 1954 Charter of the Kingdom of the Netherlands¹⁷; the 1986 Constitution of Aruba¹⁸; the 1989 Primary Education Ordinance¹⁹; the 2003 Official Languages Ordinance²⁰ and the 2011 Kingdom Act on Citizenship²¹. Interpretation of these legal documents has been supported by the 2017 report *Consequences of multilinguality for law enforcement in the Caribbean part of the Netherlands*²² of the Council for Law enforcement; the 2019 Council of Europe *Report of the Committee of Experts presented to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in accordance with Article 16 of the Charter*. Furthermore interpretation is also based on Rousseau (1762); Putte (1999); Henrard (2001); Oostindie and Klinkers (2001); Bröring,

¹⁷ Statuut voor het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden

¹⁸ Staatsregeling van Aruba

¹⁹ Landsverordening Basisonderwijs

²⁰ Landsverordening officiële talen

²¹ Rijkswet op het Nederlanderschap

²² Consequenties van meertaligheid voor de rechtshandhaving in Caribisch Nederland

Kochenov, Hoogers and Jans (2008); Eades (2010); Sonntag and Cardinal (2015); DeGraff (2016); Santos do Nascimento (2016); de Groot (2019); and Van den Berg (2020).

The national language and education policies that have been collected serve the purpose of providing insight into the nationwide mechanisms that shape and maintain the language policies and practices of the Aruban government and the tools that have been - consciously or unconsciously - put in place to promote and support that language policy. The policy papers that form the data for section 4.2 are the 1981 report *Enseñansa pa un i tur - een visie op het toekomstig onderwijsbeleid - education for one and all* by the so-called Beleidsnotacommissie, the Netherlands Antilles committee for educational policy; the 1988 policy note *Onderwijs 1988: Drie nota's* that included the following sections: 1. *The pedagogical institute: a new institute for teacher training on Aruba*, 2. *Towards multilingual education in Aruba: management note for the introduction of Papiamentu in education in Aruba*, and 3. *Education reform: priorities for the future*; the 1994 combined directorate of education, teacher training institute and teacher's union document *Experiences and new notions in language education and language planning*; the 1996 *Protocol for collaboration in education between Aruba, the Netherlands and the Netherlands Antilles*; the 1997 *Proposal for a language policy for reformed primary education* by the Aruban language committee; the 1998 Steering Committee Reform of AVO report *On the road to reform*

of secondary education; the 1999 document *Aruban education in development* by the Organizing Committee for the Royal Visit; the 2001 and 2002 reports of the Grupo di Modelo di Idioma *Habri porta pa nos drenta*; the 2005 Steering Committee Reform of AVO report *Nota Ciclo Avansa*; the *Strategic National Education Plan 2007-2017* by the Ministry of Education, Social Affairs and Infrastructure (2007); the *Masterplan Proyecto Scol Multilingual* by the Aruban education department (2007); the 2008 and 2009 reports on educational improvement by the directorate of education (2008) and the Werkgroep *Verlengde Schooldag* (2009); the 2010 *Preliminary plan for research and action into the scol multilingual project* by the Community of practice of the multilingual school; the *Final report of the review committee innovation AVO* (2011); the *Government of Aruba Education Vision and Policy 2013 – 2017* by the Ministry of Education, Family Policy and Lifelong Learning (2015); the 2016 *Advisory note for the establishment of a system of basic education for Aruba* by the directorate of education; and the 2019 *National Education Masterplan* by the Directorate of Education.

The following publications have been identified and studied in order to gain insight into the reported and researched language practice in the Antillean and Aruban education, as well as to create an overview of past evaluations of language practices in education throughout history, as discussed in section 4.3 of this work: Paddenburgh (1819); Bosch (1829); Dissel (1857); Chumaceiro A.C. (1884); Hamelberg (1896-1897); Jesurun

(1897); Chumaceiro J. (1905); Winkel (1955); Winkel (1956); Christoffel (1956); Evonius and Martinus (1956); Palm (1969); Wouters (1969); Coffie (1970); Prins-Winkel A. (1973); Muller (1975); Prins (1975); Prins-Winkel A. (1982); Geerman (1982); Prins-Winkel A. (1983); Putte (1997); Hulst (2002); Herrera (2003); Coomans-Eustatia (2005); Rosita Tormala-Nita (2007); Severing and Weijer (2008); Carroll (2009); Bak-Piard (2010); Croes, Richardson and Williams (2010); Pereira (2010); Severing and Weijer (2010); Croes R. (2011); Lasten and Tromp-Wouters (2011); Wiel (2011); Pereira (2011); Kester and Fun (2012); Kibbelaar (2012); Leuverink (2012); Faraclas, Kester and Mijts (2013); Drenth, Allen, Meijnen and Oostindie (2014); Expertgroepen Nederlands en Papiamentu (2015); Fernandes Perna-Silva (2015); Sollie (2015 a and b); Bamberger (2016); Bamberger, Mijts and Supheert (2016); Vasiç (2016); Croes R. (2017); Kibbelaar (2017); Ngizwenayo (2017); Severing (2017); Williams (2017); Pereira (2018); Fernandes Perna-Silva (2019); and Kibbelaar (2019 a, b and c).

The data presented in chapter 5 consists of two data sets. The first data set includes reader's letters and editorials, which have been collected as metadata to gain insight into both the construction of arguments for or against certain language policies, as well as into the way in which these language policies represent certain mechanisms of power or dominance, exclusion or inclusion. This data set is analyzed in section 5.2 and includes the following material: Anon (1986); Pengel (1988); SIMAR

(1988); Breet (1989); Corant (June 10, 1988); Corant (June 13, 1988); Diario (June 5, 1988); Diario (June 9, 1988); Geerman (1988); Awe Mainta (August 1, 2012); Awe Mainta (August 17, 2012); Amigoe (August 17, 2012); Amigoe (August 21, 2012); Awe Mainta (Februari 21, 2013); Bon Dia (Februari 21, 2014); Amigoe (March 6, 2017); Amigoe (March 8, 2017); Amigoe (March 13, 2017); Awe Mainta (December 14, 2017); Coster (December 18, 2017); and Rasmijn (2017).

The second data set in chapter 5 consists of 27 Facebook discussions that have been analyzed for this study, representing the input of 331 participants involved in those discussions. These discussions have been selected on the basis of Facebook searches for the following keywords: “Scol Multilingual”, “PSML”, “Papiamento”, “onderwijs”, “education” and “educacion”. The outcomes of these searches were filtered based on relevance for Aruba and on the presence of at least 10 comments with content. With a total word count of 75.000 these Facebook discussions represent the voices of a multitude of participants (amounting to 0,3% of the population of Aruba) that would normally be excluded from formal media discourse. The investigation of this data set has allowed us to better understand these voices in the societal and temporal context that prevailed at the time of the origin of each discussion.

Taken together, these sets of data are representative of perspectives on language policy in Aruba at all levels, from the macro through to the meso, micro and nano-levels of society, as they provide insights into the

workings of LPP on (supra)national level (macro level), in national regulatory institutions such as the directorate of education and the national justice system (sub macro and supra meso levels), the policy and practice of institutions such as schools, media, commercial enterprises and governmental organizations (meso level), as well as individual policies and ideologies as expressed in terms of personal principles and perceptions on language practice (micro and nano levels).

Chapter 3: Language and education in multilingual decolonial states

This chapter provides an overview of current insights on the use of languages in education in decolonial multilingual societies and elsewhere. The content of this chapter will draw on reports by international organizations and insights from academic research.

3.1 Introduction

In multilingual societies, the choice for one specific language, and the speakers of that language, implies exclusion of the other languages, and their speakers. Even if the speakers of the other languages have a certain level of competency in the chosen language, this does not mean that they have equal access to the information provided. Language policies that explicitly or implicitly promote one language over another, also promote one societal group over another. Throughout history, many national governments have established language policies that diminished linguistic diversity in order to achieve national unity through the use of one standardized language (France, Spain, Italy), or one set of standardized languages (e.g. Belgium, Switzerland, Canada and more recently, the EU). Several of these nation states were the colonizing nations that governed large parts of the globe where they also exported

their languages. In doing so, they did not only submit populations to their economic, political and military power, but also submitted them to cultural colonization, including linguistic colonization.

This linguistic colonization has led to the global hegemony of a limited number of languages often in regions where these languages are not the home languages of the majority of the population. Phillipson (2009) coins the unequal relation within the international domination of languages as linguistic imperialism (2009: 780) and argues that “linguistic imperialism entails unequal resource allocation and communicative rights between people, defined in terms of their competence in specific languages, with unequal benefits as a result.” (Phillipson, 2009, p. 780) The home languages have been relegated to a second rank position in these societies, a second rank position that still holds true in the 21st century. This second rank position would not be problematic, if not, together with these languages, the speakers of these languages are also relegated to a secondary position as access to education, judiciary, governance and socio-economic mobility are explicitly or implicitly linked to linguistic competence.

In these contexts, languages are a major obstacle to emancipation and inclusive development, and play an important role in the perpetuation of the power structures that were inherited from the colonial power relations. In African, Asian, South American, Caribbean and Pacific decolonial nation building, these power relations from the former colonizer go hand in hand with the power of the languages of the

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former colonizer. "Language is used in manipulative, oppressive and imposing ways, especially in nation-states where language has become a tool for creating, imposing and perpetuating collective identities, homogeneous and hegemonic ideologies, unified standards for inclusion and exclusion. Thus, the use of certain languages, in specific manners, with specific accents, becomes a marker of group membership, categorization, loyalty, rejection and acceptance." (Shohamy, 2006, p. xvii) Especially in these decolonial societies, the dominance of the former colonizer's language over the home languages of the population is a major remnant of colonial times. However, this hegemony of this specific set of languages in these decolonial societies cannot be taken for granted as their role and function have detrimental effects on these societies.

3.2 Reports and research on the use of Home Languages in education

Since 1953, UNESCO has been actively advocating for the use of home languages, in 1953 UNESCO vocabulary the mother tongue, as the primary language of instruction:

It is axiomatic that the best medium for teaching a child to read is his mother tongue. Psychologically, it is the system of meaningful signs that in his mind works automatically for expression and understanding. Sociologically, it is a means of identification among

the members of the community to which he belongs. Educationally, he learns more quickly through it than through an unfamiliar linguistic medium. (UNESCO, 1953, p. 11)

The importance of the psychological, sociological and educational value of the mother tongue is also recognized in later reports (UNESCO, 2000) (UNESCO, 2003) (UNESCO, 2008) (UNESCO & GIZ, 2012) (UNESCO, 2016) (UNESCO, 2020). In their 2016 report UNESCO pointed out that the use of foreign languages as language of instruction does "hold back the child's learning, especially for those living in poverty", and "the imposition of a single dominant language as the language of instruction in schools, while sometimes a choice of necessity, has been a frequent a source of grievance linked to wider issues of social and cultural inequality" (UNESCO, 2016, p. 1). As such, "every effort should be made to provide education in the mother tongue" (UNESCO, 1953, pp. 47-48) Yet, despite this international institutional acceptance of the importance of mother tongue based education, the 21st century reality is that - at least - 40% of the world's children have no access to education in their home language (Dutcher, 2004) (Walter & Benson, 2012) (UNESCO, 2016). For children speaking Creole languages at home, the mistakenly self-evident dominance of the former colonizer's languages in education has negatively impacted access to knowledge, quality education and socio-economic mobility. Despite the rise of the use of Pidgin and Creole languages in public life, "formal school instruction in Creole-speaking communities has seen comparatively little

change. [...] Few P/Cs are officially recognized as viable means of instruction." (Migge, Léglise, & Bartens, 2010, p. 2) The number of years that a student follows education in the home language, the more chance of success the student will have, to be successful in education (Cummins, 2000) (Thomas & Collier, 1997) (Thomas & Collier, 2002) (Collier & Thomas, 2017) and not drop out of school or fail in school (Young, 2009). "How language is used in school is an important factor in whether or not children succeed in education" (Pinnock, 2009). In contexts where the dominant language in the education system is a foreign language that is not or hardly present in the context in which the children live, the use of that foreign language is an important factor in whether children do *not* succeed in education.

This importance of the use of home languages in schools, is also underscored in the 2016 UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Paper *If you don't understand, how can you learn?* (UNESCO, 2016). The key messages in this report re-iterate the importance of the use of home languages in education. The use of the home language in education does not only reflect on language learning, but "has a positive impact across the board" (p. 3). While recognizing that "Linguistic diversity creates challenges within the education system, notably in areas of teacher recruitment, curriculum development and the provision of teaching materials" (pp. 5-7), those challenges should be overcome and "education policies should recognize the importance of mother tongue learning" (p. 5). As a rule of thumb, UNESCO claims that "At least six

years of mother tongue instruction - increasing to eight years in less well-resourced conditions - is needed to sustain improved learning in later grades for minority language speakers and reduce learning gaps" (pp. 3-4).

These recommendations can also be recognized in the 2016 publication *The impact of language policy and practice on children's learning: evidence from Eastern and South Africa* (Trudell & UNICEF, 2016), which, on the basis of 21 African country profiles and 3 case studies on language use in African multilingual societies, conclude that "using a language of instruction that learners understand should become standard practice" and authorities should invest in pilot multilingual education programmes (p. 120).

A publication by Heugh et al. from 2006 states that there is a number of six "Simple basic principles" (Heugh, Benson, Bogale, & Yohannes, 2007, p. 126), that are consistently ignored in significant parts of the world. Their six simple basic principles are closely interlinked. The first, second and sixth principles focus on the language proficiency of the teachers, as 1. "all languages MUST be taught by a teacher who has 'native-like' or 'near-native-like' proficiency in the language", 2. "languages cannot be taught by teachers who do not have advanced levels of language proficiency" and 6. "Teachers who teach the L2 or FL as a subject or use it as a medium of instruction MUST have 'native-like' or 'near native-like' proficiency in this language." As for the languages used, they are very clear too: 3. "The best language for teaching and learning is the mother

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tongue / home language of the student." and 4. "The next best language for teaching and learning is another language which is widely used in the local environment, and which is already known by the student when s/he enters school. This is often called the second language / L2."

Finally, "The most difficult language to use, and one which can only offer the most elite and talented students any success, is a foreign language (FL)."

These six simple basic principles would help tackle four challenges for inclusive development of the nations that give preference to the former colonizer's language over the home language of the people: 1. the development of literacy; 2. the psychological development through expression and understanding; 3. the sociological development through recognition and identification, and finally, 4. the educational development (UNESCO, 1953, p. 11). From an educational perspective, this last principle has been further developed into going from the known to the unknown (Cummins, 1981) as a fundamental basis for children's development, success and wellbeing in education. As the children in these multilingual decolonial classrooms often have multiple languages in their linguistic repertoires, translanguaging is part of their social practice that can be further developed as an educational strategy to enhance inclusive multilingual educational practices (Garcia & Wei, 2014, pp. 6, 11, 137).

Thus far, this chapter has focused on the basic principles of language and education, and on the state of the use of languages in postcolonial

education. In the next section of this chapter, we will introduce five brief case studies on six countries that demonstrate that these basic principles are consistently violated, and no remedies are put in place to address the way in which the populations involved are excluded from contextually and individually adequate language regimes.

3.3 But does it really happen? Regional, minority and... majority languages.

The UNESCO, UNICEF and other recommendations may be well received by advocates of home language or mother tongue language of instruction, the reality that still over 40% of the world's children still do not have access to education in a language that they speak or understand holds true. These children have to learn the language of instruction first in order to be able to learn.

We have to understand the specific character of multilingualism in decolonial societies in contrast with other, more traditionally recognized and studied forms of multilingualism. For that purpose, we may distinguish four major groups of people that have no access to education in a language that they speak or understand. 1) In multilingual countries with multiple official languages, like Canada, Switzerland, Belgium and South Africa, language provisions have not always been made to facilitate education in all languages of that nation in all regions, leaving population groups either the option to 'abandon' their home

language or to move to regions where their language is a language of instruction for their children; 2) Migration, voluntary or forced, is one of the main reasons why children end up in situations where they go through an education system in which the language of instruction is not their home language, far from. However, in many of these cases, the language of education will be the dominant language in that society and also the majority language. This is a second group that does not only include labor migrants, but also political and economic refugees, often with a complex and temporary status; 3) A third group would be the speakers of so called minority or regional languages, as described in the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML). The ECRML describes these languages as "languages that are: i. traditionally used within a given territory of a State by nationals of that State who form a group numerically smaller than the rest of the State's population; and ii. different from the official language(s) of that State; it does not include either dialects of the official language(s) of the State or the languages of migrants" (ECRML, 1992); 4) A last and often forgotten group are the speakers of majority languages in countries and states in which the home language of the majority of the population is not the language of instruction in schools, or in judiciary, or in governance, despite the fact that the languages that are used for these official functions are a foreign language to the greater majority of the people of that region.

In the global North, challenges that arise in multilingual countries, or from migration and the existence of minority and regional languages are well known and well studied. Both the first, second and third group have been the center of attention of a multitude of academic and policy studies, both in Europe and in the US, and time and again attempts have been made to capture the complexities of the position and challenges of the fourth group under the umbrella of minority languages and regional languages. This is incorrect and unjust; there are fundamental differences between the four different groups that do not justify that their situations are treated equally.

The obvious nature of mother tongue instruction in the global North is reflected in a strong defense of education in the languages of the global North:

For most native speakers of the 'state-building or 'national' languages of the world, it is a foregone conclusion that their children should be educated (entirely or at least primarily) in their mother tongues. Since these mother tongues are often simultaneously demographically, politically, socially, culturally and economically dominant, it is also often crystal clear to their native speakers that other children (i.e. children for whom the official or national languages are not mother tongues) should also be educated in these languages because of their association with 'greater individual and collective advantage'. (Fishman, *Minority mother tongues in education*, 1984)

Hand in hand with this hegemony of the nation's language, the acquisition of the national language is one of the first goals of migrants, as a token of belonging. This reflects the Euro-American dream of belonging through assimilation, leaving the past behind, "choosing, encouraging [...] children to speak English, not the old language from the old country: to speak, dress, act, *be* American. The old stuff we tucked away in a cellar, or discarded, or lost." (Rushdie, 2017, p. 12)

I will illustrate the point made in the previous paragraphs through a series of short studies of the position of languages in Haiti, Lesotho, Swaziland, Cape Verde, Mauritius and Vanuatu. What these countries have in common is that the official languages and/or the language of instruction in school and/or the language of judiciary, is the former colonizer's language, and a foreign language to the majority of the population, whereas the home language(s) of the majority of the population are excluded from or tolerated in these domains. In all six cases, this has not led to a successful emancipation of the populations of these territories. The adoption of the former colonizer's governmental, legal and educational structures leads to legal frameworks and policy constructions that do not always benefit the majorities of the citizens of nations, but are geared towards conformity with the former colonizer's frameworks on the basis of a perceived or constructed benefit for the peoples of the small and insular or isolated states involved. In recent decolonization processes, the home languages of the majority of the population are neglected, whereas the former

colonizer's languages are given a pivotal position in these postcolonial societies.

3.3.1. Haiti

The Republic of Haiti, the country that forms the western half of Hispaniola, is home to about 11 million inhabitants. 95 percent of the country report to speak Haitian Creole as their home language, only 5 percent report to be francophone. However, up until now, nearly the whole structure of the education system in Haiti, along with its language policies and instructional practices, is evocative of the colonial past of the country (Marky, 2016, p. 13).

The Haitian revolution (1791 - 1804) led to the establishment of the sovereign state of Haiti in 1804, the first independent nation of the Caribbean as the outcome of the slave revolt. The constitution of 1805 was drafted in French, just like all subsequent constitutions. From the onset of the nation, the establishment of schools throughout the country, has been a point of great attention in legislation. Nevertheless, until today, access to education and educational materials remains a matter of social class and the different values attributed to French and Haitian Creole remain a serious problem (Marky, 2016). The first constitutional stipulation on the use of languages was in article 24 of the constitution of 1918 in which French was declared to be the official language, and its use was made mandatory in administrative and judiciary matters. The constitution of 1964 was the first to mention

Haitian Creole as it made an allowance for the use of the language to safeguard the material and moral interests of those who have insufficient knowledge of French (article 35). The constitution of 1983 maintained French as the official language, but also stipulated that French and Haitian Creole are the national languages (article 62). The constitutional position of French as the sole official language of the country was maintained until 1987.

The use of French in legislation and the judiciary has led to international critique for Haiti. In 1979, the Inter-American Committee for Human Rights concluded that in Haiti

Many of the accused persons held in Port-au-Prince (and of course in other urban areas) are poor and illiterate, hardly speak or understand French (which is the official language of the Court), and have a very poor understanding of how Haitian justice works. Moreover, despite the government's efforts in this regard, the Haitian people are not always fully aware of the rights guaranteed to all citizens by the Penal Code and the Constitution of Haiti (Inter-American Commission on Human Rights of the Organization of American States, 1979).

Up until today, French is the language in which legal proceedings are conducted and legal materials are printed (UNHRC Working Group, 2016). It was not until 1987 that the Haitian constitution recognized Haitian Creole as the common unifying language and included Haitian

Creole as an official language, alongside French. Article 5 states that "All Haitians are united by a common language: Creole. Creole and French are the official languages of the Republic". It may be considered a symbolic choice to put Creole first (article 62 of the constitution of 1983 still put French first before Creole, in spite of the alphabetic order), in recognition of the value of the language for the population of Haiti.

Article 40 of that same constitution regulates the government's duty to provide information in both languages: "The State has the obligation to publicize in the oral, written and televised press in the Creole and French languages all laws, orders, decrees, international agreements, treaties, and conventions on everything affecting the national life, except for information concerning national security." The same constitution even includes the constitutional guarantee that "A Haitian Academy shall be established to standardize the Creole language and enable it to develop scientifically and harmoniously" (art. 213). In retrospect, it is painful to observe, that this constitution that finally recognizes Haitian Creole, was published in French, and that no official translation of this constitution in Haitian Creole became available. The establishment of the Haitian academy had to wait for a long time: it took until 2015 to establish the Akademi Kreyòl Ayisyen, 28 years after the constitution mandated its establishment.

The dominance of the French language in education is recognized as a fundamental issue for the development of an inclusive Haitian society and the use of French in education in Haiti is deemed to be the core of

the failure of Haitian education (Dejean, 2010) (Hebblethwaite, 2012) (DeGraff, 2016). Despite the fact that French is not the home language of the majority of both the teachers and the students in schools, and despite the fact that educational attainment in Haiti is extremely low, French is still maintained as the language of instruction and is still seen as the - only - gateway to educational success (Avalos & Augustin, 2018).

The constitutional - mainly symbolic - protection of Haitian Creole does not provide sufficient guarantees for the speakers of that language, the majority of the Haitian population. The maintained adoption of French, and not of the language of the majority of the people of Haiti in education, government and the judiciary excludes the vast majority of the population from equal opportunities in these three domains. Even after more than 200 years of sovereignty, the Haitian state has failed to shake off the former colonizer's language, and maintains that language, as well as the related institutional structures and practices at the expense of its own people's development. In Haiti, as in so many decolonial states, the recognition of the home language of the people, is a long and painful process that fails to address the needs of the people of that country.

3.3.2. Lesotho and eSwatini

The position of Sesotho in Lesotho and Siswati in eSwatini, formerly known as Swaziland, bear strong similarities as in both countries they are the home language of virtually all residents whereas in both countries "English enjoys far more esteem and privileges than its co-official languages, Sesotho and Siswati" (Kamwangamalu, 2013, p. 157). Sesotho is the mother tongue of reportedly 95 per cent of the population (Bureau of Statistics, 2019, p. 163) or even more (Kamwangamalu, 2013, p. 160) of Lesotho. In eSwatini, reportedly virtually all Swazis speak Siswati (Kamwangamalu, 2013, p. 161), and for at least 75 per cent it is the home language (Trudell & UNICEF, 2016, p. 74). Both countries inherited the administrative infrastructure and the language from colonial times, Lesotho gained independence in 1966, Swaziland in 1968. In both countries, the home language of the majority of the population is recognized next to English as official language in the constitution, in both cases even mentioned before English. However, that does not mean that the status of the language is equal, or that the domains of use are equal.

The status issues are reflected in the education system, as Sesotho and Siswati are the languages of instruction in the first grades of primary schools but are then replaced by English as language of instruction (Government of Lesotho, 2020) (NCC, Ministry of Education and Training, 2018) "despite the fact that approximately 75 per cent of the

population of Lesotho do not speak English" (Trudell & UNICEF, 2016, p. 40) and fewer than 10 per cent of the population of Swaziland speak English (Trudell & UNICEF, 2016, p. 74). Kamwangamalu (2013, p. 161) describes a clear functional distinction between the different languages as "Sesotho and Siswati are used mainly for daily oral communication and for transmission of the indigenous traditions and cultures from generation to generation" whereas "there is no need for English usage beyond the confines of the classroom and other formal domains." In Lesotho, many citizens do not complete more than the first years of primary education and remain monolingual speakers of Sesotho (Ekanjume-Ilongo, 2015, p. 1158), the situation in eSwatini is similar. Competency in English is a precondition for progress in education, and students that fail to demonstrate sufficient competency in English cannot progress, a situation that was recognized as early as 1987 by the Swaziland Ministry of Education:

"While it makes sense to insist on the ability to read, write and speak English well for those students proceeding with education up to the University and teacher training levels, it is not clear why pupils who are leaving school at Junior certificate and below should be failed in English as those are likely to take up hand-skills employment" (Swaziland Ministry of Education in (Kamwangamalu, 2013, p. 162)).

According to the 1993 constitution of Lesotho, art. 3.1 "The official languages of Lesotho shall be Sesotho and English and, accordingly, no instrument or transaction shall be invalid by reason only that it is expressed or conducted in one of those languages." and language is listed as one of the characteristics that are protected under the fundamental human rights and freedoms as stipulated in art. 4.1 of that constitution: " Whereas every person in Lesotho is entitled, whatever his race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status to fundamental human rights and freedoms, that is to say, to each and all of the following [...]". The provisions in the 2005 constitution of eSwatini are less verbose: art. 3. (2) of the constitution reads: "The official languages of Swaziland are Siswati and English".

In Lesotho, the traditional safeguards for language facilities in case of arrest, trial or detention are regulated in art. 6.2²³, 12.2.b and f²⁴ and 21.2/21.2.a²⁵. In Swaziland, these safeguards are laid down in art.

²³ "Any person who is arrested or detained shall be informed as soon as is reasonably practicable, in a language that he understands, of the reasons for his arrest or detention."

²⁴ "(b) shall be informed as soon as reasonably practicable, in a language that he understands and in adequate detail, of the nature of the offence charged" and "(f) shall be permitted to have without payment the assistance of an interpreter if he cannot understand the language used at the trial of the charge"

²⁵ 21.2 "When a person is detained by virtue of any such law as is referred to in subsection (1) the following provisions shall apply, that is to say -" and 21.2.a "he shall, ...

16.2²⁶, art. 21.2.c and g²⁷ and 36.8.a²⁸. In both countries, the languages of parliamentary proceedings are both official languages (for Lesotho constitution 58.1.b and c.²⁹, for Swaziland constitution art. 121.1.a.iv³⁰.

as soon as reasonably practicable after the commencement of his detention, be furnished with a statement in writing in a language that he understands specifying in detail the grounds upon which he is detained;"

²⁶ "(2) A person who is arrested or detained shall be informed as soon as reasonably practicable, in a language which that person understands, of the reasons for the arrest or detention and of the right of that person to a legal representative chosen by that person."

²⁷ "A person who is charged with a criminal offence shall be
(c) informed as soon as reasonably practicable, in a language which that person understands and in sufficient detail, of the nature of the offence or charge;
and
(g) permitted to have, without payment, the assistance of an interpreter if that person cannot understand the language used at the trial."

²⁸ "Where a person is detained or restricted by virtue of a power exercised in the absolute discretion of any authority and conferred by any such law as is referred to in section 38(1), the following shall apply, that is to say
(a) that person shall, as soon as reasonably practicable and in any case not more than seventy two hours after the detention or restriction, be furnished with a statement in writing in a language that the person understands specifying in sufficient detail the grounds upon which that person is detained or restricted "

²⁹ "(b) is able to speak and, unless incapacitated. by blindness or other physical cause, to read and write either the Sesotho or English languages well enough to take an active part in the proceedings of the Senate."

and
"(c) is able to speak and, unless incapacitated by blindness or other physical cause, to read and write either the Sesotho or English language well enough to take an active part in the proceedings of the National Assembly."

³⁰ "each chamber of Parliament may make Standing Orders with respect to
iv. conduct of debates or other proceedings in that chamber in one or both official languages;"

Lesotho adds to this legislative framework the freedom from discrimination, including discrimination on the basis of language in art. 18.3³¹, 18.5³² and art. 26.1³³

Unfortunately, all these constitutional safeguards are no more than minimum guarantees that fail to promote and achieve real equality and status that could lead to increased socio-economic mobility of the speakers of these languages. Illustrative is that even the government website of Lesotho fails to mention that Sesotho is an official language next to English: "Languages Spoken: Sesotho (southern Sotho), English

³¹ "In this section, the expression "discriminatory" means affording different treatment to different persons attributable wholly or mainly to their respective descriptions by race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status whereby persons of one such description are subjected to disabilities or restrictions to which persons of another such description are not made subject or are accorded privileges or advantages which are not accorded to persons of another such description."

³² "Nothing contained in any law shall be held to be inconsistent with or in contravention of subsection (1) to the extent that it makes provision with respect to standards of qualifications (not being standards of qualifications specifically relating to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status) to be required of any person who is appointed to any office in the public service, any office in a disciplined force, any office in the service of a local government authority or any office in a body corporate established by law for public purposes."

³³ "Lesotho shall adopt policies aimed at promoting a society based on equality and justice for all its citizens regardless of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status."

(official), Zulu, Xhosa" (Government of Lesotho, 2020) As "English is associated with employment opportunities; it has more prestige than Sesotho and Siswati both locally and internationally, it is the language of government and administration and international communication; it is the language of power and status and the language of the elite" (Kamwangamalu, 2013, p. 162). As long as these beliefs and institutional practices persist, Sesotho and Siswati will remain second rank languages and the use of English will remain a barrier in the development of a more inclusive and successful education system.

3.3.3. Cape Verde

In the archipelagic Republic of Cape Verde, Cape Verdean Creole is the recognized national language and the home language of virtually all Cape Verdeans. The official language is Portuguese, the language of the former colonizer that is used in administration, law and education. Most newspapers, publications and televised news are in Portuguese (Baptista, Brito, & Bangura, 2010) (Baptista, 2013). Cape Verde became an independent state in 1975, after 500 years of Portuguese colonization. Due to its location off the coast of West-Africa, the country played a pivotal role in the Atlantic trade and slave trade.

Portuguese is the language that is associated with social status and success in Cape Verde. In the past, "Those few well-to-do families

"made up of Europeans and their descendants" [...] educated their children in Portugal, imitated the English life style and used Portuguese almost exclusively as a way of demarcating their social status" (Swolkien, 2015, p. 97). Currently Portuguese plays an important role in the socio-economic status of its speakers: "Thus, as in Cape Verde in general, the levels of proficiency in Portuguese [...] may differ widely, especially in relation to their socio-economic status" (p. 112) and "Regarding language choice, the socio-cultural status of the interlocutor is an important factor" (p. 114). Cape Verdean is spoken throughout the archipelago, but does not have equal status to Portuguese. First attempts have been made to standardize the language in an orthographic convention (Baptista, Brito, & Bangura, 2010, p. 282) and the language, including the insular variation, is studied. Both Cape Verdean and Portuguese are recognized as "part of the history, culture and identity of every citizen" (Baptista, Brito, & Bangura, 2010, p. 295) but specifically for Cape Verdean, more steps need to be taken to "attain its rightful place in all spheres from which it has been excluded for five centuries, including that of education" (p. 296)

Education in Cape Verde is well organized and in comparison with other African education systems, the success rates are high. However, drop out levels are higher than one would expect, "in part, [due] to education being exclusively in Portuguese" and "only those few who went to university in a Portuguese-speaking country show an effective knowledge of the language" (Swolkien, 2015, p. 112). There appears to

be a systematic challenge when it comes to the use of Portuguese as the language of instruction: "a high percentage of preschool children have never read or been read to in Portuguese. When children enter kindergarten or first grade, teachers immediately begin teaching them to read in Portuguese, using the official Portuguese language textbooks provided by the government [...]" (David, 2018, p. 20) The sudden transition between the language used at home, Cape Verdean, and the language used in schools, Portuguese, constitutes a challenge for the children in these classrooms. Reportedly in 2001 only "40 per cent of the population speaks Portuguese as a second language and 70-80 per cent have at least passive knowledge of it" (Bartens, 2001, p. 37) and the majority (91.3%) prefer to speak Creole and for 40.6% speaking Portuguese poses a problem for fear of making mistakes (Lopes, 2011, p. 115).

The Constitution of 2010 distinguishes between Portuguese as the *official* language in art. 9.1 but promises to promote the conditions to achieve official status for Cape Verdean, at equal footing with Portuguese, in art. 9.2³⁴. This is in line with art. 7.i in which the preservation, valorization and promotion of the Cape Verdean language

³⁴ "1. É língua oficial o Português.

2. O Estado promove as condições para a oficialização da língua materna cabo-verdeana, em paridade com a língua portuguesa.

3. Todos os cidadãos nacionais têm o dever de conhecer as línguas oficiais e o direito de usá-las."

and culture are said to be fundamental tasks of the state³⁵. According to art. 11.6, Cape Verde maintains special friendship and collaboration ties with countries that have Portuguese as an official language and with countries that host Cape Verdean migrants³⁶. This special connection with countries where Portuguese is one of the official languages is also expressed in art. 25 that stipulates that specific rights can be attributed to people from Portuguese speaking countries that cannot be attributed to migrants from other countries³⁷.

Language is mentioned as one of the core personal characteristics that are protected against discrimination under the constitution in art. 24³⁸. In art. 79.3.f, special provisions are made to guarantee the right to culture, including explicitly the Cape Verdean mother tongue³⁹.

³⁵ "7. São tarefas fundamentais do Estado: i. Preservar, valorizar e promover a língua materna e a cultura cabo-verdianas"

³⁶ "6. O Estado de Cabo Verde mantém laços especiais de amizade e de cooperação com os países de língua oficial portuguesa e com os países de acolhimento de emigrantes cabo-verdianos."

³⁷ "3. Poderão ser atribuídos aos cidadãos dos países de língua oficial portuguesa direitos não conferidos aos estrangeiros e apátridas, excepto o acesso à titularidade dos órgãos de soberania, o serviço nas Forças Armadas e a carreira diplomática."

³⁸ "Todos os cidadãos têm igual dignidade social e são iguais perante a lei, ninguém podendo ser privilegiado, beneficiado ou prejudicado, privado de qualquer direito ou isento de qualquer dever em razão de raça, sexo, ascendência, língua, origem, religião, condições sociais e económicas ou convicções políticas ou ideológicas."

³⁹ "3. Para garantir o direito à cultura, incumbe especialmente ao Estado: f. Promover a defesa, a valorização e o desenvolvimento da língua materna cabo-verdiana e incentivar o seu uso na comunicação escrita;"

Despite these constitutional safeguards for the Cape Verdean language and its speakers, "the language of education remains an unsolved dilemma" (Swolkien, 2015, p. 109) that can be directly linked to the quality and the success of schooling. The constitution promises the protection and promotion of Cape Verdean Creole, but progress is slow. For now, the language has not yet achieved real equal status to Portuguese, and is described as "a dialect of European Portuguese" (Cooperativa Desenvolvimento de Cabo Verde, 2021) and "the language of the home and the street remains Cape Verdean Creole, a mixture of Portuguese and African dialects." (David, 2018, p. 20). Only if and when the status of Cape Verdean Creole becomes equal to the status of Portuguese, and it is used as an official language next to or instead of Portuguese, the emancipation of the speakers of that language in the education system and in society can become a reality.

3.3.4. Mauritius

Mauritius is an island state in the western Indian Ocean where the majority of the population speaks a French lexifier creole, Mauritian Creole, also known as Morisyen. According to the Atlas of Pidgin and Creole Language Structures, Mauritian Creole is the de facto language of Mauritius, it is "spoken by almost all the island's ca. 1,250,000 population as a first, second or additional language" (Baker & Kriegel, 2013). In the 2011 census 86.5% of the population indicated that

Mauritian Creole is their home language. A little over 5% of the population speak Bhojpuri. French is dominant in the media, despite being the home language of only 4.1% of the population and English is the only official language (Baker & Kriegel, 2013). English is the home language for 0.3% (Atchia-Emmerich, 2005, pp. 212, iv) up to 0.5% of the population (Ministry of finance and economic development - Statistics Mauritius, 2012, p. 81).

Mauritius is "a postcolonial state, whose population was multiethnic from the very beginning", "ethnically, linguistically and religiously diverse" (Waldis, 2018, p. 8). Mauritius is burdened with its colonial past, and this is represented in the beliefs on language and status. The acceptance of multilingualism and multiculturalism as an integral part of being Mauritian is at odds with the colonial ideologies of an ideal monolingual nation state and the inferior or secondary status of creole languages in comparison with the former colonizer's languages (Bissonauth-Bedford, 2019). Despite being the home language of the majority of the population, and despite being adopted by different ethnic and religious backgrounds, the language struggles for recognition and the introduction of the language in the education system still has a long way to go. As long as the language is not recognized in all domains of language use, its position will fail to contribute to the development and emancipation of its speakers. It is "restricted to informal[ly] settings, reserved solely for interaction between friends, family, or as

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languages used to communicate with illiterates in the market place"
(Ekiye, 2020, pp. 51-52)

The position of Mauritian creole is not embedded in the constitution of Mauritius; those of English, the official language of the country, and French are. The constitutional positioning of English becomes clear when looking at the regulations for the qualification for membership (of Parliament) as laid down in art. 33.d of the constitution: "a person shall be qualified to be elected as a member of the Assembly if, and shall not be so qualified unless, he (d) is able to speak and, unless incapacitated by blindness or other physical cause, to read the English language with a degree of proficiency sufficient to enable him to take an active part in the proceedings of the Assembly."

Of course the constitution safeguards human rights, including the provisions on being informed of the reasons for arrest or detention, as well as criminal charges in a language one understands (art. 5.2⁴⁰, art.

⁴⁰ "(2) Any person who is arrested or detained shall be informed as soon as reasonably practicable, in a language that he understands, of the reasons for his arrest or detention."

5.4.a⁴¹, art. 10.2.b and f⁴²) as well as for the restriction of freedom of movement (art. 15.4.a⁴³ and art. 18.3⁴⁴)

As stated before, the only other language mentioned in the constitution is French: addressing the official languages of the national Assembly, art. 49 stipulates that "The official language of the Assembly shall be English but any member may address the chair in French." Providing specific privilege for French, home language of only 4% of the population, and

⁴¹ "(4) Where a person is detained in pursuance of any such provision of law as is referred to in subsection (1)(k) – (a) he shall, as soon as is reasonably practicable and, in any case not more than 7 days after the commencement of his detention, be furnished with a statement in writing in a language that he understands specifying in detail the grounds upon which he is detained;"

⁴² Provisions to secure protection of law: Constitution: "(b) Every person who is charged with a criminal offence – (b) shall be informed as soon as reasonably practicable, in a language that he understands and, in detail, of the nature of the offence;" and "(f) shall be permitted to have without payment the assistance of an interpreter if he cannot understand the language used at the trial of the offence"

⁴³ "(4) Where any person whose freedom of movement has been restricted in pursuance of subsection (3)(a) or (b) so requests – (a) he shall, as soon as is reasonably practicable and in any case not more than 7 days after the making of the request, be furnished with a statement in writing in a language that he understands, specifying the grounds for the imposition of the restriction;"

⁴⁴ "Where a person is detained by virtue of any such law as is referred to in subsection (1) (not being a person who is detained because he is a person who, not being a citizen of Mauritius, is a citizen of a country with which Mauritius is at war, or has been engaged in hostilities against Mauritius in association with or on behalf of such a country or otherwise assisting or adhering to such a country) – (a) he shall, as soon as is reasonably practicable and in any case not more than 7 days after the commencement of his detention, be furnished with a statement in writing in a language that he understands, specifying in detail the grounds upon which he is detained;"

not Mauritian Creole, home language of more than 80% of the population, is an institutionalized demonstration of the structural lack of recognition for Mauritian Creole.

The language regime in Mauritius has been described as linguistic genocide, a strong claim that resonates in multiple publications on the topic (Rajah-Carrim, 2007, p. 56) (Ekiye, 2020, pp. 53-54). On world Creole language day, November 5, 2003, the secretary president of Ledikasyon pu Travayer (Education for the workers) sent an open letter to the minister of education with the following accusation:

"The State is, in fact, hindering our people in the natural expression of our languages, Bhojpuri and Kreol. It is this that makes the Government responsible, through the schools in particular, for a crime against humanity, the crime of linguistic genocide. That is what we are accusing you of, Mr. Minister."
(Ah-Vee & Collen, 2003)

Leading up to this accusation, the letter stated that

And today, in the context of the World Kreol Language Day, we are making a formal and public appeal to you to stop killing children's mother tongues in school, through the politics of excluding Mauritian Kreol and Mauritian Bhojpuri from schools, thus forcing children to change from their own linguistic group to the group of another. We are formally making an appeal to you to stop making children suffer the severe mental harm that is

provoked by the constant insinuation in schools that children's mother tongues are inferior, are of no use or are not real languages. The damage done is inestimable. (Ah-Vee & Collen, 2003)

The outcry had an effect. In 2004, the Mauritian "Minister of Education declared the Kreol would be officially introduced in the education system in the coming years." (Rajah-Carrim, 2007, p. 51) and the Mauritian Ministry of Education and Human Resources reported in 2014 that "it is recommended for teachers to start a number of activities in the mother tongue of the learners as scaffolding for the learning of the second languages" (Ministry of education and human resources, 2014). Mauritian Creole has been introduced as an optional language subject in primary schools in 2012 (Ministry of education and human resources, 2014, p. 34) and in secondary schools in 2018 (Bissonauth-Bedford, 2019), however, the language still needs to find its place as an official language of instruction and as a language that provides access to education and socio-economic mobility for its speakers.

3.3.5. Vanuatu

The number of individual languages listed for Vanuatu in Ethnologue (2019) is 113. Of those, 111 are living and 2 are extinct. Of the living languages, 109 are indigenous and 2 are non-indigenous. Furthermore,

5 are institutional, 21 are developing, 31 are vigorous, 44 are in trouble, and 10 are dying. Early (2015) lists 135 languages. Vanuatu is linguistically the most diverse nation in the world, with more indigenous languages reported per inhabitant than any other nation in the world. The Republic of Vanuatu consists of some 80 islands, 65 of which are inhabited. The country's population is estimated to be around 275,000 (Early, 2015). In this linguistically hyperdiverse archipelago, Bislama, an English lexifier creole also known as Bichelamar, is the de facto lingua franca. Bislama, English and French are considered to be the official languages of the state but the prescribed languages of education are English and French.

The history of Vanuatu bears little resemblance to the other states that were included in this series of case studies. The archipelagic island state Vanuatu is located in the South Pacific Ocean and has had an independent status until 1906. Until that year, jurisdiction and governance were the matter of the inhabitants of the islands, but the French and British interests in the islands were governed by legislation for the protection of French and British citizens, as well as for commercial interests. Between 1906 and 1980 the islands were a British-French condominium under the name *The New Hebrides*. The condominium was ruled, as confusing as that may be, by separate French and British administrations. The language one spoke determined jurisdiction, one for French speaking settlers and one for English speaking settlers, indigenous interests were not protected under this

legislation. This linguistic divide perpetrated in all of Vanuatu's society, and even feelings towards independency followed linguistic lines, as English-speaking people favored early independence, whereas French speaking people favored continuing association with the colonial administration, particularly the French one (Country Watch, 2018, p. 10). Until independence in 1980, the indigenous population remained stateless as they were ineligible for any form of citizenship (Rawlings, 2019).

The 1980 constitution of the new independent state of Vanuatu regulates the use and protection of languages. Article 3 of the constitution states that “3.1 The national language of the Republic of Vanuatu is Bislama. The official languages are Bislama, English and French. The principal languages of education are English and French.” The distinction between the different roles of languages is interesting: there is a national language, Bislama, the first language of a small part of the ni-Vanuatu population, and the second language of the majority of the island's population and a symbol of national identity (Ethnologue, 2019) as well as the lingua franca of Vanuatu (Meyerhoff, 2013); there are three official languages, Bislama, English and French that are used for administrative communication; and there are the languages used for education, English and French. The constitutional adoption of French and English as languages of education at the independence of the

country reconfirms the adoption of the former colonizer's languages as primary languages for the development of the country.

The constitution also recognizes the Republic of Vanuatu's duty to protect the more than 100 indigenous languages in article "3.2. The Republic of Vanuatu shall protect the different local languages which are part of the national heritage, and may declare one of them as a national language." The recognition of the so-called "local languages" as national heritage is a first inclusive step that reflects the recognition by the government of the importance of national heritage; opening the possibility for declaration of one of these languages as a national language is a second - symbolic - step. This article may create a symbolic space for the indigenous languages, it does not open a possibility for the use of one or more of these languages for official purposes, nor for the use of one or more of these language as principal language of education.

The Vanuatu constitution regulates the "right of a citizen to service in own language" in article 64.1 which states that "A citizen of Vanuatu may obtain, in the official language that he uses, the services which he may rightfully expect from the administration of the Republic of Vanuatu." The "own language" is limited to the official languages as stipulated in article 3.1 of the constitution, Bislama, English and French, and as such, the "local languages" are excluded from official use. Citizens of the Republic of Vanuatu are expected to speak at least one of the official languages in order to be able to communicate with the

administration, and citizens who aspire to be civil servants are also selected on the basis of their knowledge of - preferably all - official languages.

Driven by the need to "support the use of local vernacular languages and Bislama, our National language, to fulfil educational and cultural needs and practices", the Educational Reform of 2012 opens the doors for children's home language as the initial language of instruction and literacy for the first years of school (Ministry of Education, 2012). Article 2.1 of the Policy stipulates that "Schools and teachers must teach in either French or English in all schools. However, in the first two years of school, Bislama or a local vernacular can be used while either French or English is introduced in the second semester of Year 3. By the end of Year 3, the language of instruction should be either French or English. However, teachers will continue to use, for as long as necessary, the agreed local vernacular languages to support children as they make the transition to English or French." At least this is a legal confirmation of the need for the recognition of the importance of children's home languages in education, whereas at the same time this is a reconfirmation of the position of English and French in the decolonial society of Vanuatu. The Educational Reform of 2012 provides hope for addressing the poor results of Vanuatu's education system and for addressing the fact that for over a century the home languages were neglected in the education system (Charley, 2015).

The Vanuatu Constitution of 1980 as well as the new educational policy of 2012 display an attempt to recognize vernacular languages as well as the creole language Bislama. In the constitution and the new educational policy, all languages that are not Bislama, English or French are referred to as vernacular languages. The formulation of the Vanuatu Constitution may lead the reader to think that Bislama is put first, and vernacular languages are promoted in a special way. A deeper analysis of this legislation points in the opposite direction: however much effort is invested in a positive and inclusive formulation of both the Constitution and the language act, both documents in fact consolidate the position of English and French in Vanuatu. This legislation resonates and echoes the language policies of the former colonizers, France and Great Britain. The third article of the first chapter of the constitution regulates the National and Official Languages, addressing this topic before the article on fundamental democratic principles: National Sovereignty, Electoral Franchise and Political Parties, and preceding the chapter on Fundamental Rights and Duties. The fact that the third article of the Constitution is fully dedicated to the identification of the national and official languages as well as the commitment to the protection of the different local languages, is a strong indication that from a political point of view, at the time of the composition of the Constitution, the identification of and the position of the languages in Vanuatu was of high importance.

The case study of the Republic of Vanuatu demonstrates that even when the colonial rule consisted of a very confusing and exclusive binational and bilingual consortium that was merely concerned with commercial affairs and the protection of its expatriate citizens, the decolonial new state can adopt both colonial languages as official languages and languages for education. As such, the new state Vanuatu maintains the exclusive language regimes of the former colonizers at the expense of the development of its own citizens.

3.4 In conclusion

This chapter started with an inventory of internationally accepted basic principles on the importance of home languages for education, recognizing the importance of the psychological, sociological and educational value of the home language of children. The neglect of home languages is not only important in education though, it also negatively influences access to justice, governance and socio-economic mobility. The case studies presented in this chapter demonstrate that these basic principles are consistently violated, and no remedies are in place to address the way in which the populations involved are excluded from contextually and individually adequate language regimes. As stated before, there are four major groups of people who have no access to education in a language that they speak or understand. The fourth group in that classification consists of the speakers of majority

languages in countries and states where the home language of the majority of the population is not the language of instruction in schools, or in judiciary, or in governance. The languages that are used for these official functions are foreign to the greater majority of the people of that region.

The case studies presented here are illustrative of the fact that countries where the former colonizer's languages (still) dominate the language(s) of the majority of the population are not an exception, on the contrary. In all six countries discussed, the former colonizer's language maintains a central and prestigious position and functions as a gatekeeper to socio economic success, education and justice. Despite the fact that the majority of the populations of these countries do not speak the former colonizer's language as a home language, and despite the fact that part of educational failure can be, and is, attributed to failing language policies, the status quo is maintained.

Constitutional claims and promises for the protection and promotion of home languages as such do not guarantee equality. They should be seen as no more than the start of an emancipation process that should lead to the recognition of the socioeconomic value of these languages and the translation of that recognition in policy and practice. Constitutional claims and promises primarily focus on the languages concerned, not on the speakers of those languages. Whether the languages of the majority of the population are creole languages, or languages that were there long before colonization started, the status of the colonizer's languages

remains such that the speakers of the home languages are disadvantaged in many domains. In postcolonial schooling systems the home language is more often than not replaced by the former colonizer's language. That former colonizer's language is the goal, the higher ground, on which *developed* citizens stand, and which separates success from limited development, or failure. As a consequence, colonial structures and power relations are reduplicated and perpetuated.

Chapter 4: Language policy and planning in Aruba and the former Netherlands Antilles: present and historical overview of top-down perspectives

This chapter contains a description of the historical backgrounds of the current situation in Aruba, drawing upon legislation, literature and policy texts from Aruba, the former Netherlands Antilles as well as the colonial Netherlands. Section 4.1 describes the way in which the role of languages in education, governance and judiciary is embedded in and prescribed by law. Section 4.2 provides a historical overview of policy documents and governmental position papers on language and education. Section 4.3 provides a historical representative overview of research publications on the development and consequences of LPP in

Aruba. Section 4.4 contains a conclusion on the colonial imprint on LPP in Aruba.

4.1 Binding legislation: historical overview of legislation on the use of language in Aruba

4.1.1 Legislation on language in the pre-1954 Curaçao and dependencies and in the post-1954 Netherlands Antilles

The Dutch policy of *One nation, one kingdom, one language*, as proclaimed by King William I (Putte, 1999) had a great influence on the development of the vision that Dutch should be the language in the Dutch colonies too. In pre-1819 Curaçao and dependencies, as the colony consisting of six islands was called, education was not regulated. It was in that year that a *Provisioneel reglement op het schoolwezen* (published in Publicatieblad 28, 1819) was decreed by Governor Kikkert, with the aim to bring the education in the colony up to par with the Dutch improved education system. In Curaçao, there were some pre-existing private schools, and this decree established four public primary schools where one could learn reading, writing and some basic mathematics, and even, in two of these four schools, geography, history

and foreign languages. Education was to be provided in the *Nederduitse taal*, Dutch. In Aruba, as of 1822 a schoolmaster was appointed.

By 1935, legally, nothing had changed: art. 36 of Publicatieblad 43, 1935 states "The language of instruction in education is Dutch. For the northern Antillean islands education may be partially or fully provided in English, upon the instructions of the governor". Despite changes in perspective on the use of languages in education around the turn of the century, and despite the use of the mother tongue in catholic schools, the legal perspective did not change and Dutch remained the norm.

In 1954 the reorganization of the colonial Netherlands became a fact when the Charter for the Kingdom of the Netherlands was signed in The Hague. The painful transition to independence of Indonesia and the decolonization of the world, demanded new political and constitutional relations that would accommodate the need for independence of the former colonial territories in a constitutional structure that emphasized equality and reciprocity. It was at this date that 'Curaçao and subsidiaries' changed into the new state of the Netherlands Antilles, officially creating the new state consisting of six islands, Curaçao, where the central power would reside, Aruba, Bonaire, Saba, Sint Eustatius and Sint Maarten. The constitution of this new state was the *Staatsregeling van de Nederlandse Antillen*, in Dutch, and no mention is made of language. In the times after 1954, the regulations as published in 1935 (Publicatieblad 43) remained in effect, and Dutch remained the language of law and governance.

It was not until 2003 that Papiamentu would get official status next to Dutch in Aruba, as will be illustrated in the following paragraphs, and in the Netherlands Antilles, it took until 2007, only three years before the dissolution of the multi-island state, that Papiamentu and English received official status next to Dutch. In Curaçao that official status has been maintained, in Sint Maarten, Dutch and English are the official languages, and in Bonaire, Saba and Sint Eustatius, Dutch is the official language since 10-10-10.

4.1.2 Current legislation on language in Aruba

The legislation regarding language in the *judiciary* in Aruba is as follows⁴⁵. The starting point is the Kingdom legislation on the Caribbean judiciary⁴⁶. This legislation establishes Courts of First Instance⁴⁷ and a High Court⁴⁸, with the possibility of an appeal in cassation at the Supreme Court⁴⁹ in The Hague. The language of procedure is one of the

⁴⁵ This section is based upon Bröring, H., and Mijts, E. (2017). Language planning and policy, law and (post)colonial relations in small Island States : a case study. *Social Inclusion*, 5(4) (p. 29–37) and on Mijts, E. State traditions and language regimes in Aruba and other small island states: some preliminary thoughts on the study of language legislation as discourse. In Faraclas, N. et al. (eds.) *Archaeologies of Erasures and Silences: Recovering othered languages, literatures and cultures in the Dutch Caribbean and beyond*. San Juan/Willemstad: University of Puerto Rico/University of Curaçao (p. 161- 165)

⁴⁶ Rijkswet Gemeenschappelijk Hof van Justitie

⁴⁷ Gerecht in Eerste Aanleg, GEA

⁴⁸ Gemeenschappelijk Hof van Justitie, GHVJ

⁴⁹ Hoge Raad

official languages. In practice this is normally Dutch, occasionally, when all participants agree, Papiamentu/u is used or English. The decision of all courts is always in Dutch⁵⁰ and all procedural documents are in Dutch.

In the prevailing constitutional and political view, it is emphasized that the Kingdom of the Netherlands consists of four equal countries. Completely different is the view of Ryçond Santos do Nascimento who draws the conclusion that nowadays, the organization of the Kingdom of the Netherlands is still of a colonial nature (Santos do Nascimento, 2016, p. 282). This view is partly confirmed by Peter van den Berg who states that "the decolonization process with regards to the Caribbean parts of the Kingdom is internationally most probably not perceived as completed" (Van den Berg, 2020, p. 161). The decolonial process of the Kingdom of the Netherlands is a slow and oftentimes painful process (Bröring, Kochenov, Hoogers, & Jans, 2008) (Oostindie & Klinkers, 2001). In any case, when it comes to legislation the Netherlands is by far the biggest in terms of human and financial resources needed for law-making. Actually, the Dutch influence in the Caribbean countries of the Kingdom is very strong, inter alia where legislation (legal transplants) and judiciary (Dutch judges and other legal professionals) are involved.

⁵⁰ Article 9 Rijkswet Gemeenschappelijk Hof van Justitie.

This is enhanced by the so-called *concordance principle* of Article 39 of the Charter of the Kingdom of the Netherlands⁵¹.

Does this mean that the use of Dutch in Caribbean legislation and legal procedures is unavoidable? From a legal point of view, the answer is no. The concordance principle does not compel the use of unidirectional legal transplants nor the use of Dutch in legislation and the judiciary, it is the Aruban law that prescribes Dutch as the legal language. From the perspective of the legal professional, a dominant position of English, and especially Papiamentu, would be a real obstacle for the participation of Dutch judges in the Caribbean judiciary, since most of these judges are typically employed in the Caribbean for only a few years. From the perspective of a citizen seeking legal remedies, the situation is completely different, as the use of Dutch as the legal language forms an obstacle to the accessibility of the court system and to legal procedures. This lack of accessibility is an issue for the principle of substantive equality in proceedings (Henrard, 2001) on the basis of linguistic inequality and is conducive for the maintenance of neocolonial power (Eades, 2010, p. 115) in which the speakers of the home language of the majority of the population are minoritized in the judicial process.

Neither politicians, lawyers, judiciary nor other stakeholders have paid much attention to this question of the use of languages in legal

⁵¹ Statuut voor het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden

procedures and legislation. In the past some debates took place, but in the end the use of Dutch was taken for granted. The main reason behind the acceptance of the dominant position of the Dutch language seems to be a pragmatism based on the scale of the societies involved. Illustrative (and remarkable) is the report *Consequences of multilingualism for law enforcement in the Dutch Caribbean territories*⁵², published by the Kingdom Council for Law Enforcement.^{53 54} This council states that in the Dutch Caribbean territories "the exception is the rule": normally the national language is the language in law enforcement, whereas in the Caribbean territories Dutch is the formal language of law. Most striking is the council's overall conclusion that "the Council finds no reason to discuss Dutch being the formal language of law. The fundamental and practical arguments for such a change do not weigh up against the fundamental and practical objections."⁵⁵ This main conclusion, that there is no reason for even *discussing* the issue, has been adopted by the Minister of Safety and Justice.⁵⁶ The argumentation provided does not mention any form of potential human rights issues or issues for legal certainty on the basis of linguistic inequality, but does however emphasize the importance of the use of

⁵² *Consequenties van Meertaligheid voor de rechtshandhaving in Caribisch Nederland*

⁵³ Raad voor de Rechtshandhaving

⁵⁴ March 2017. Appendix of TK 2016/17, 29 279, nr. 392. With summary, examination and recommendation in English (p. 12-18), and in Papiamentu (p. 19-24).

⁵⁵ Appendix, p. 13.

⁵⁶ In his letter of 3 July 2017 to the Dutch Parliament, TK 2016/17, 29 279, nr. 392.

Dutch as a binding factor in the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Ending the use of Dutch as the formal language of court proceedings in the Caribbean part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands would be "harmful for the interconnectedness of the countries within the Kingdom" (Raad voor de rechtshandhaving, 2017, pp. 43-44). The report of the Council for Law Enforcement on multilingualism concerns the Dutch Caribbean territories (from the Country of the Netherlands), but one may say that its arguments pro and con the use of Dutch instead of Papiamentu or English are applied *mutatis mutandis* in the context of the Caribbean countries of the Kingdom.

At the Kingdom level it is stated that Dutch is the leading judiciary language. At the level of the Caribbean countries, choices are made about the use of languages for legislation and communication between the public administration and the citizens, and within the public administration.⁵⁷ Overall, the dominance of Dutch is striking.

The persistence of the use of the former colonizer's language as the norm can be better understood through a more in-depth study of language legislation, and legislation in general, as discourse that represents the uneasy decolonial relations in the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The following section provides an illustrative case study of the current legislation with respect to language use in Aruba: Aruban

⁵⁷ In accordance with treaties, with extra language rights in the domain of criminal law.

Official Languages Ordinance (2003), the Primary Education Ordinance (1989) as well as the supranational Kingdom Act on Citizenship (2011).

The discrepancies between language policies and laws in decolonial small island states and social practice in these communities can often only be explained through a deep understanding of the extent to which language policies these countries are co-determined by the state tradition and language regimes of the former colonizer (Sonntag & Cardinal, 2015). In the discussion on language policy in small island states, the argumentation used in favor of specific languages is likely to be rooted in the former colonizer's frameworks (DeGraff, 2016). This leads to language policies and practices that can only be explained on the basis of the shadow of the colonial past, rather than on the basis of common and basic (sociolinguistic) insights.

As a matter of fact, in many cases the island state will follow the language regime of the former colonizer with respect to law, governance and education, adopting the former colonizer's constitutional, legal and governmental framework, including much of its judicial and educational system and related language policies.

Innovation in the different domains of language use in the public sector in these countries is consequently likely to follow the developments of the former colonizer's systems. Quality control – either in government, the judiciary or the educational system – is modeled on the one found in the metropole, and more often than not, the quality control agencies of the former colonizer are invited to impose their frameworks on the

small island state's systems. In contrast, the economic and business sectors of society appear to follow a different and more pragmatic path, developing their own language practices in all domains, including the drafting of – sometimes problematic – contracts that are not written in the language of the law (the colonial heritage language), but instead in a language more accessible or acceptable to the island's population. As such, the development of language policy, planning and practice in the public sector appears to be moving in a very different direction from language policy, planning and practice in the private sector, resulting in an increasing disconnect between the educational, governmental and judicial systems on the one hand and societal practice on the other.

Law, in a parliamentary democracy, can be viewed as the discourse in which the norms, values and fundamental basic principles of a society are laid down by the collective voice of that society, the democratically elected parliament. In Rousseau's approach, laws in the sovereign state represent the voice of the people and the expression of their general will (Rousseau, 1762). As such this voice has to be taken seriously as a representation of what is formalized as the people's voice. Due to the nature of the law-making process, laws are static in character and are always representations of a compromise with the past.

A discursive approach to law provides us with insights into democratically confirmed belief systems as to what is considered to be appropriate behavior and what is not, and, when we talk about language laws, about which language can be considered to be

appropriate, and which is not. These laws are translated into policies that (try to) regulate practice in institutions and societies. It is interesting to study the possible tensions between those policies and the law, but we limit ourselves to a study of the law as it is at this moment, and how it reflects belief systems. In doing so, we will demonstrate that the laws on language in Aruba are a vehicle of (post-)colonial thinking, as these exhibit a demonstrable inclination towards favoring Dutch over Papiamentu as a language that is more adequate for specific governmental, educational and legal purposes.

The main legislation that prescribes or describes language use in Aruba are the Official Languages Ordinance (2003) and the Primary Education Ordinance (1989). Language legislation in Aruba positions Papiamentu as a language that is at best tolerated and at worst excluded from use. The Official Languages Ordinance, article 2, states that Papiamentu and Dutch are the official languages of Aruba. In this article, contrary to alphabetical order, Papiamentu precedes Dutch in an apparent symbolic attempt to put emphasis on the role of Papiamentu in Aruban society. Article 3 of the same ordinance regulates the use of languages in interaction between citizens and government. It does give both parties the authority to communicate in one of the two official languages, but it does not provide a guarantee to the citizens that the government will use the language of the citizen. Both citizen and government are free to use the language of their choosing. The law makes provision for

translation, but only at the expense of the citizen who requests it, and without any guarantee of quality.

Articles 4.1 and 4.2, which regulate languages used in an oath, promise or statement, does stipulate that Papiamento and Dutch can be used alongside each other, but in this part of the ordinance, Papiamento is presented as an accepted alternative for Dutch. The phrasing "instead of the legally prescribed Dutch words, one is allowed to use the corresponding Papiamento words" does not give both languages equal status, but instead positions Dutch as the norm and Papiamento as an acceptable alternative.

Article 5 contains only five words, but these words are crucial:

"Wetgeving geschiedt in het Nederlands" (The language of legislation is Dutch). In this article, the language of legislation is prescribed, and it is not the majority language, but the home language of only 6 percent of the population of the island. No provisions have been made in this law that stipulate how the government might provide translations of legislation in the majority languages. Ignorance of the law excuses no one, but how are you supposed to know the law if the law does not speak your language? Further stressing the exclusive use of Dutch in legal matters, article 6 states that the language of criminal proceedings is Dutch. Despite the fact that there are minimum requirements laid down in international law on the availability of court interpreters, this

practice in which the judicial process is organized around the linguistic skills of the judicial system and not of the population is questionable. The fact that no formal training for Papiamentu – Dutch translators and interpreters is available further problematizes this situation.

The use of Dutch in education is prescribed by law. The Ordinance for Primary Education treats Dutch as the norm: article 9 prescribes Dutch as the official language of education, except for the first two years of kindergarten. Only a recent special ruling by the Minister of Education has allowed Papiamentu to be used as the language of instruction. As such, this article 9 of the Ordinance for Primary Education stipulates that the language of the former colonizer is to be preferred over the language of the majority of the population.

The last example takes us beyond the borders of the country of Aruba up to the level of legislation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands that applies to four countries, Aruba, Curaçao, Sint Maarten and the Netherlands. It is interesting to note that during the discussions on this law in the Aruban national parliament, this legislation was seen as a symbolic recognition of the importance of the Papiamentu language. Article 8.1.d of this law stipulates the linguistic requirements for the acquisition of state citizenship: if one wants to become a national of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, while resident and complying with all other requirements, one must submit proof of sufficient knowledge of the Dutch language. Yet, residents applying for the same citizenship in Aruba, Curaçao, Sint Maarten and the Netherlands Caribbean special

municipalities of Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba, must submit proof of knowledge of both the Dutch language *as well as* the prevailing language of that territory. Unfortunately, this condition limits the possibilities for these islands to integrate residents who want to become citizens, because they must pass two language tests instead of one. Moreover, one of these language tests poses particular problems for most potential candidates, since Dutch is not present in the media, in the linguistic landscape or on the labor market of these islands. The double language test that was hailed as a recognition of the islands' languages in fact has become an extra obstacle or those seeking to obtain Kingdom nationality in the Caribbean, potentially limiting the full social and legal integration of long-term residents of these islands that have to make an extra effort to demonstrate their language skills in two languages rather than one. No matter which language is chosen, the choice to require proficiency in two languages rather than one constitutes an inequality between the Caribbean and European countries of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

This brief analysis demonstrates that, despite the fact that former colonial ties have been replaced by a different set of relations designed ostensibly to take the Kingdom of the Netherlands into the 21st century, the laws concerning language on Aruba are a paradigmatic example of how the state tradition of the Netherlands continues in the legislation of the now officially autonomous islands of the Kingdom, in spite of solid evidence that the language policy that results from this legislation does

not appear to lead to favorable results for the populations of the islands. The voice of the people of the nation of Aruba that should be represented in law appears to be overruled by voices that represent the former colonizer's truths and state traditions. The continuing predominance of the metropolitan state tradition which has always favored the Dutch language is demonstrated in the formulation of legislation in which the mother tongues of the overwhelming majority of the populations of the islands is at best presented as an acceptable alternative to Dutch, and at worst excluded from use in key areas where citizens' rights are at play: in education, the judiciary, law making, and even in the people's right to citizenship. Following efforts to develop protection for Papiamentu and the speakers of Papiamentu under the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages (De Groot, 2019), the language now is under consideration for recognition as a regional language on the basis of traditional presence in the Netherlands (Council of Europe, 2019, p. 7) which may support further development of legal protection in Aruba.

4.2 Pathways for change: policy on language in Aruba. A history of national and departmental policy (proposals) on the use of language in Aruba

This section provides a historical overview, pre- and post Status Aparte overview of policy documents and the shifts in position on the use of language in education, in combination with the policy documents produced by the directorate of education on educational reform. The content of these documents is presented here in historical perspective, as a basis for analysis in chapters 6.

4.2.1 Policy papers Netherlands Antilles before 1986

Aruban education policy pre-1986 was primarily governed by the Antillean central government in Curaçao. Between 1954 (the year of the establishment of the Netherlands Antilles), and 1986 (the year of the establishment of the Status Aparte for Aruba), only one crucial policy document had been created: *Enseñansa pa un i tur - een visie op het toekomstig onderwijsbeleid - education for one and all*. This document, that was the product of three years of intensive work by an inter-insular committee, aimed to address the failure of the educational system of

the Netherlands Antilles in preparation for full independence of the state.

Enseñansa pa un i tur - een visie op het toekomstig onderwijsbeleid - education for one and all

The 1981 report *Enseñansa pa un i tur - een visie op het toekomstig onderwijsbeleid - education for one and all* is the main document that is later referred to as the diagnosis of the failure of the decolonial education system. It was composed and published by the Beleidsnotacommissie, later often referred to as BNC (Beleidsnotacommissie, 1981). This report presented the findings of the Antillean committee for educational policy, representing the different islands of the Antilles, that was installed in 1978 in order to develop a vision for a contextually adapted educational system. The committee was established 24 years after the formation of the Netherlands Antilles, as one of the post-colonial constitutional entities of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in 1954. Its findings were devastating.

The title of the report, in three languages, is representative for the linguistic challenge of this reform, with English being the majority language for the SSS-islands, Papiamentu for the ABC-islands, and Dutch being the official language and the language of education. Goal of educational reform would be to address challenges that had been identified with respect to 1) the language problem, 2. the expenses for

education, 3. the issue of repeaters, 4. compulsory education, 6. participatory decision making, 7. decision making structure, 8. selection problems, 9. education for nation building (p. 1). Based upon reports and qualitative interviews, as well as on three years of monthly meetings, the committee had come to this final report, all in all 190 pages touching upon all these topics.

In its summary of recommendations, the committee reserves an important role for the introduction of education in the mother tongue, Papiamentu on the ABC-islands, and English on the SSS-islands for primary education, and where possible, for secondary education. Challenges that were identified as obstacles in that development were the matter of orthography, the choice of a model for mother tongue instruction, the matter of the choice for a second language, the training of teachers, the availability of educational materials, financial feasibility and the planning of the introduction of a mother tongue based education system (p. 4). As preparation for the introduction of Papiamentu as language of instruction, the committee recommended the establishment of a linguistic institute for the development and standardization of Papiamentu as well as the introduction of Papiamentu as subject in primary and secondary education (p. 5).

In the report, a number of socio-economic challenges related to education are listed, including the unbalanced distribution of incomes and capital, high unemployment rates due to the declining numbers of jobs in the oil industry, the influence of foreign capital on the local

industries and the dependency on external expertise for industry and education (pp. 14 - 18). The complex political relations between the Antilles and the Netherlands, but also between the islands of the Netherlands Antilles are also identified as challenges as well as the way in which political parties exploit the weaknesses of these relations for political profit and citizens are alienated from politics (pp. 18 - 23).

In the discussion of social challenges in the Antilles, the traditional economic power of the white colonials and the associated superiority of European culture and civilization, were the basis for a racially divided society in which *somatic*, physical appearance was more important than socio-economic criteria (p. 24). Modernization and industrialization would have led to change in governance, trade, service industry, education and culture. The Antilles became dependent on and part of the capitalist global economy and the traditional social fabric was disrupted by these developments. However, through differences in position of the ethnic and racial groups, the relations between race and social position and status continued - albeit partly (p. 25). The vast majority of the population was lower and upper lower class, many of which were low-educated and dependent on poorly paid odd jobs (p. 27). Not only discrimination on the basis of race and ethnicity, but also on the basis of gender is pointed out as one of the challenges for the Antilles (p. 29).

Finally, as for the discussion of the cultural backgrounds of the populations of the islands, the report recognizes the interplay of African

and European elements as well as the Amerindian roots of the populations of Aruba and Bonaire. Yet again, the report also recognizes the dominance of the European culture over African culture, and not only that, but also the perception of European culture as the superior culture of the civilized world while African cultural expressions were said to be barbaric. Due to assimilation, Indian cultural expressions would have faded away (p. 31). The high appreciation of European culture was perceived to lead to social appreciation of white skin color, and, according to the report, a sense of inferiority among people of color. The introduction of Western consumption patterns and behavior and ideology in the Antillean world, in combination with the active *Dutchification*, the use of Dutch as language of instruction in schools and a well meant scholarship structure that provided opportunities for young Antilleans to follow education in the Netherlands, further strengthened the lack of appreciation for authenticity, including the own language and culture (pp. 31 - 32).

The first section of p. 33 deserves literal translation: "As most important mechanism of cultural transfer and spread we can identify the Antillean education system, which is largely a copy of the Dutch, the communication media, religion, especially the Roman-Catholic Church and the consumption pattern" (p. 33). At the time of writing of this report, the Dutch influence was diminishing, but ingrained in culture and education, and the southern islands of the Netherlands Antilles

were influenced by "Venezuelan cultural imperialism through cultural exchanges, grants, cultural centers".

The education system is described as a copy of the education system of the former colonizer that will also follow educational reform in the former colonizer's education system, typical for formerly colonized developing countries (p. 34). This education system is described as pedagogically and psychologically irresponsible, which also manifests itself in the problem of home language and language of instruction. Dutch, as a foreign language, is the language of instruction, and the mother tongue has no place in education. This applies to Papiamentu and English-speaking children as well as to children who have another linguistic background. This means that children who do not have Dutch as a mother tongue, are at great disadvantage when compared to their Dutch or Dutch-speaking peers. Across the board, Papiamento-speaking children on the ABC-islands perform worse than Dutch-speaking children from correlating social classes (p. 35). This education system resembles a gauntlet that benefits specific groups, and disadvantages others. "An education system that, through its content, structure and organization does not offer possibilities for all groups in society, in such a way that equal participation and equality of opportunity are equal, is an undemocratic system (p. 36).

In conclusion to the analysis of the state of the Antillean education system, the committee states the following:

It is sad that we have to conclude, that until this day, policy makers have not indicated a path that should lead to an adjustment of these educational challenges.

The delay of, or better, not taking relevant decisions is striking. Of course, all this has - to some extent - a relation to the structural and mental ties with the Netherlands, in the form of e.g. Dutch exams, and respectively in the myth that the Dutch system is the best.

Fact is however, that up until today, we do not have our own education policy (p. 42).

The second part of the document contains the proposal for a new educational system for the Netherlands Antilles, rooted in political, economic and cultural independence, including the expansion of the *landstaal (vernacular)*, in this case Papiamentu and English (p. 48). This is later on repeated and complemented with the view that literacy should be rooted in the vernacular and proficiency in at least one language that has the characteristics of a world language and facilitates regional integration (p. 54).

Page 68 to 82 focus on a more detailed discussion of the language of instruction in education. First the discrepancy between the formal language of instruction, Dutch and the mother tongue of the vast majority of the children in schools is determined to be a key problem in education. The report mentions accommodation practices in Kindergarten and in primary schools, but also stresses the lack of

consistency and method of the use of the mother tongue, especially on the ABC islands. In secondary education, Papiamentu has been introduced as part of the curriculum in some schools on the ABC islands. On the basis of cultural-political, developmental psychology and educational motives the committee argues for the introduction of the home language school (pp. 70 - 71). However, the committee also identifies a number of challenges. The political weight of the discussions on the introduction of a uniform spelling for Papiamentu for all islands is one of the challenges. A second one is the indecisiveness on the didactic approach for the introduction of Papiamentu as language of instruction, either in a bilingual transitional model, in which Papiamentu would still be at the service of Dutch as official language of education, or the full-fledged introduction of Papiamentu as language of instruction in all foundational education in the ABC-islands while paying attention to proficiency in the two dominant languages of the Western hemisphere, English and Spanish (pp. 72 - 73). Finally, the conclusion is drawn that the introduction of Papiamentu as language of education could also lead to its development as full-fledged tool for communication in all domains (p. 74).

In the ensuing description of the model for educational reform for the ABC islands, Dutch is not mentioned as the roles are divided between Papiamentu as language of instruction and English and Spanish as the foreign languages that deserve attention as regionally dominant languages. In pre-higher-education programs (so-called *A.V.O.*), the

language of instruction and the materials should be oriented towards the future language of higher education, the mother tongue should be a subject and should be the language of instruction for cultural and societal formation in these tracks and for tracks that have a more vocational nature, the mother tongue should be the language of instruction unless a second language is fundamental in the execution of the profession this track leads to. In that case, both the mother tongue and that specific profession-related language will be the languages of instruction (pp. 74 - 75).

As Dutch is the official language and the language of education at the moment of writing of the report, and the authors of the report assume that the Netherlands Antilles should become independent, they also see no more role for Dutch in governance and education. Hence they have designed an education model that anticipates that independence.

Based upon the expectation of independence the committee advocates the introduction of English as second language of instruction, also as that would facilitate exchange between the ABC-islands and the SSS-islands (p. 72). Introduction of English as second language of instruction would also entail that Antillean future teachers would not go to the Netherlands for further study anymore, and no more Dutch teachers would be attracted to teach in the Antilles (pp. 78 - 79). The challenge of producing Papiamentu educational materials is recognized as a planning issue and a moderate financial issue for the introduction of the reform (p. 80).

In the rest of the report, the language of instruction is also indicated as fundamentally interwoven with challenges for pre-school education (p. 94), primary education (p. 94) and special education (for which the use of Dutch is considered to be *ridiculous*) (p. 96).

In the following pages, all aspects of the structural reform are touched upon. Page 123 - 137 deal with higher education, especially the history, current and future state of the University of the Netherlands Antillen (UNA) in Curaçao, and the pedagogic academies in Aruba and Curaçao. Except for one mention of the introduction of English as language of instruction in the SSS-islands, no mention is made of language of instruction, nor of the role the university or the pedagogic academies can play in the establishment of mother tongue based education in the Antilles (pp. 123 - 137). Despite the expectation that the educational systems in the Antilles and the Netherlands will drift further and further apart, the committee emphasizes that the access to higher education in the Netherlands will be safeguarded through bilateral agreements. However, the committee is also of the opinion that the current orientation to the Netherlands will have to make way for a broader orientation in the region, if only because most probably the special arrangements for Antillean students in the Netherlands would not be maintained (pp. 137 - 139).

4.2.2 Policy papers Aruba since 1986

From the onset of the Status Aparte in 1986, a series of position papers and educational policies have been written by government-funded organizations and departments that proposed education policies as well as language policies (mostly for Aruba's education system). In most cases these language policies were intended primarily for education, in some cases they focus on the language itself, language and law, language and citizenship or language use and governance. Apart from the 1981 policy proposal described in the previous section, before the Status Aparte, a number of position papers were written that address the uncomfortable use of languages in society and education and that point out the odd position of Dutch, describing Dutch as a *ghost language* (Instituto Lingwistiko Antiano, 1981) that only has an official role but does not play a role in the Antillean society. This positioning of Dutch as a ghost language or as a dead language in the Antillean societies was later confirmed in publications by e.g. Sanders (1998, p. 27) and Mijts (2007) (2008).

Onderwijs 1988: Drie nota's

The first government of Aruba ruled from 1986 - 1989, and consisted of a broad coalition that had to solve the financial, social and economic crisis that the new state of Aruba faced. In 1988, in execution of the first government program of the state of Aruba, three recommendations on education in Aruba were brought together in one publication with an

introduction by the first minister of education of Aruba, A.G. (Mito) Croes. In his introduction, he emphasizes the fundamental role of an efficient national education system for sustainable socio-economic development (Croes A. , 1988). In the same introduction, he emphasized that integral reform of the education system in Aruba was imperative, but he also warned that successive course changes in education reform can have disastrous effects on education and society. All three documents in this publication were about educational reform and course changes. Unfortunately, Mito Croes caution was not heeded. The three reports brought together in this collection are fundamental in understanding the development of the positioning of the different languages in Aruba's educational landscape in the next decades as they are the textual embodiment of the hopes, ambitions and dreams at the critical juncture of the Status Aparte.

The three recommendations, the introduction as well as the first and third were written in Dutch, the second written in Papiamentu had the following titles: 1. *Het pedagogisch instituut: een nieuw instituut voor de scholing van onderwijsgeevenden op Aruba*⁵⁸ (Anon, 1988); 2. *Pa un enseñansa bilingual na Aruba: nota di maneho pa introdukshon di Papiamentu de enseñansa na Aruba*⁵⁹ (Directie Onderwijs Aruba, 1988); and 3. *Renovacion di enseñansa: prioridad pa futuro. Nota van de*

⁵⁸ *The pedagogic institute: a new institute for teacher training in Aruba.*

⁵⁹ *Towards bilingual education in Aruba: policy advice on the introduction of Papiamentu in Aruban education.*

*stuurgroep herstructurering onderwijs*⁶⁰ (Stuurgroep herstructurering onderwijs, 1988).

The first report, in Dutch, in this collection contains the foundations for the reform of the teacher training and the establishment of the Instituto Pedagógico Arubiano - IPA (Aruban Pedagogical Institute) in 1990. IPA would take over the roles of the Arubaanse Pedagogische Academie (Aruban Pedagogic Academy) that had been the teacher training institute since 1969, training teachers for Kindergarten and primary education. The tasks for this new academy would be to provide the initial training of teachers, to provide lifelong learning for teachers, to conduct research for teaching, to stimulate educational reform and to serve and support the professional educational field. Papiamentu is not a focus point in this document, nor Dutch, nor language.

The second report in this publication, *Pa un Ensenansa Bilingual na Aruba* (Directie Onderwijs Aruba, 1988) is a report produced by the committee that had been installed to study the language of instruction in Aruban schools and to advise the Aruban department of education and the Aruban government on the introduction of Papiamentu as a language of instruction in schools. The committee came to the

⁶⁰ *Educational reform: priority for the future. Advice from the steering committee for educational reform.*

conclusion that Aruban schools should transfer to bilingual education. The report is written in Papiamentu.

In the introduction of the policy advice by the committee it is emphasized that little or no preparatory work had been completed to introduce Papiamentu in education, such as literature studies, teacher training, curriculum and teaching materials development (p. EB 3). The point of departure of the committee was clear: the use of a foreign language in education, is an anomaly that has to be corrected. As Papiamentu is the *national language*, and Dutch is important in specific societal roles, the committee proposes a bilingual primary education system in which both Papiamentu and Dutch are used as language of instruction. The committee has deliberately chosen to use *national language* instead of mother tongue as "the use of the concept of mother tongue brings with it that one would have to introduce the mother tongue of minority groups (English, Spanish, Dutch, Portuguese, etc.) as language of instruction in education as well" (p. EB 3). As this would cause financial and capacity challenges, that approach was deemed to be too expensive and, even more, would create divisions in society that hardly existed. As almost all children from minority groups would be proficient in Papiamentu when entering primary education, there would be no problem. According to the introduction, 80.1% of the population would use Papiamentu at home, and 87.2% of the population would be proficient in the language. The committee agrees to the fact that the introduction of Papiamentu as language of

instruction will not solve all problems of education. Other challenges are vague end qualifications, an unjust internal and external selection structure, irrelevant curriculum contents etc. (p. EB 4) As such, changing the language of instruction would have to be part of a total reform of the education system. Yet, the committee concedes that despite the need for a total reform of the education system, a phased approach would be advisable due to the complexity and scale of such an operation. In such a phased approach, the introduction of bilingual education would have been a priority.

The policy advice is written in an innovative new orthography of Papiamentu, as proposed by the committee for the revision of the orthography of Papiamentu in 1987. This new orthography, applicable for Aruba but not for Curaçao and Bonaire, was one of the fundamental pitfalls for the development and exchange of educational materials in the Papiamentu speaking corner of the world.

The policy advice itself (pp. EB 6 - 26) in general does not speak about the introduction of bilingual education, but primarily about the introduction of Papiamentu as language of instruction. The introduction of Papiamentu as language of instruction would be rooted in

1. sociolinguistic principles: addressing linguistic inequality and providing Papiamentu with the position it deserves (p. EB 6);

2. developmental psychology: addressing the disconnect between school language and home language, as well as the discontinuation of

language learning and personal development through the shift from Papiamentu to Dutch, leading to the democratization of education through accessibility (pp. EB 6 - 7);

3. pedagogical and didactical considerations: the disregards for what children have learned at home, and violating the basic pedagogic principle of going from the know to the unknown, recognition of the fact that for teachers Dutch is a foreign language as well is an obstacle in the educational process (pp. EB 7 - 8); *and finally*

4. political and cultural considerations: focusing on the discrepancy between the national language and the language of instruction, the discrepancy between the Dutch character of the educational system and the non-Dutch character of society, resulting in a disregard for and lack of recognition of the Aruban culture and isolation of the education system. Introduction of Papiamentu would also become a vehicle for cultural development (pp. EB - 8).

Concluding the introductory remarks of the policy advice, the concept of bilingual education is abandoned: "All four categories of considerations for the introduction of Papiamentu in education are geared towards achieving a situation in which it will not be necessary anymore to use another language than our own. A normal situation. This normalization is the starting point and goal of the committee" (pp. EB - 8). Maintaining Dutch as language of instruction is presented as a temporary compromise *por lo pronto* (for the time being) as Dutch plays an

important role in government *por lo pronto* and in secondary education *por lo pronto* as we do not have the capacity to change that at the same time that Papiamento is introduced in primary education. "This situation forces us to create a primary education system with Papiamento and Dutch as languages of instruction" (p. EB 8)

In the actual policy proposal, the proposed quantity of hours dedicated to Papiamento as language of instruction was 75%, Dutch would be 25% (pp. EB - 12) and the committee proposes to maintain Papiamento as language of instruction for vocational and special education and to - at least - introduce Papiamento as a subject in all other forms of education (p. EB 13).

The rest of this policy contains an impressive overview of the preparatory tasks that would have to be executed to introduce Papiamento as language of instruction, split up in five categories: 1) Papiamento, 2) Introduction of bilingual education, 3) Planning, 4) Community, 5) Politics and law.

For 1) Papiamento the following tasks would have to be performed: orthographic standardization of Papiamento, lexical standardization of Papiamento, grammatical standardization of Papiamento, a study of Aruban and Antillean literature in Caribbean and global perspective, a study of oral literature of Aruba and the Antilles, the preservation of texts with historical and cultural value. For 2) the introduction of bilingual education a task force would have to be initiated to prepare

initiate, supervise and evaluate the implementation of bilingual education in primary schools; the preparation of teacher trainers (an estimate of 250 - 300 teachers were to be retrained); the training of the teachers; the development of a new curriculum; and the development of teaching materials. 3) Planification tasks would include psycholinguistic studies on language acquisition; sociolinguistic studies on the use of and proficiency in the different languages in Aruban subcultures; and the study of language planning. 4) Community efforts would be directed towards informing and motivating the public about the Papiamentu cause, promoting the use of proper Papiamentu, promoting the production of books in Papiamentu, promoting functional alphabetization in Papiamentu and the promotion of Papiamentu as an official language next to Dutch. Finally, 5) politics and law would entail five action points: the decision to introduce bilingual instruction in primary schools; an official decision on the use of languages of instruction in (post) secondary education; the officialization of Papiamentu; the official decision on the revision proposed by the Committee on the Revision of Orthography; and the introduction of a law authorizing experimental education (pp. EB 14 - 19)

The tasks would have to be carried out by a number of taskforces, the one mentioned above that would prepare, initiate, supervise and evaluate all activities, a second one that would promote Papiamentu and establish a Pro-Papiamentu Foundation and finally the

establishment of a research institute, IDILA: Instituto di Lengua Arubiano (pp. 20 - 23).

The third document is the report on educational reform from the Steering Committee for Educational Reform (Stuurgroep herstrukturering onderwijs, 1988). The title of this report is in Papiamentu, the text is in Dutch. The document outlines the guiding principles, goals and structure of the new educational system, ranging from pre-school (Kindergarten) to primary and secondary as well as higher education and non-formal education (lifelong learning, certificate programs etc.). Special attention is paid to compulsory education, care structure, governance and the language of instruction. The steering committee acknowledges in the introduction that the language of instruction is probably the most widely discussed matter in Aruban and Antillean education and the steering committee recommends implementation of the proposals for the introduction of the bilingual school in Aruba (p. RE 7).

This report on educational reform uses the term *moedertaal* (*mother tongue*), for Papiamentu, and *dominante taal* (*dominant language*) for Dutch, contrary to the earlier described report *Pa un enseñansa bilingual na Aruba* (Comishon pa introdukshon di Papiamentu, 1988), which explicitly chooses the term *idioma nacional* (*national language*) over *idioma materno* (*mother tongue*) (p. EB 3) as a strategic counter against claims for mother tongue language of instruction by other language groups in society.

The report recognizes the fact that the existing system replicates the social inequality in and through education and that the development in education in Aruba is closely interconnected with the developments in the Netherlands. (p. RE 19) The transition from Papiamentu as language of communication in Kindergarten to Dutch in primary education is recognized as a bottleneck (p. RE 22), as well as the Dutch cultural orientation of the curriculum - creating a divide between school and society (p. RE 24). In order to illustrate the linguistic disconnect between society and school, "Kabes Duru" (Prins-Winkel, 1973, p. 179) is quoted:

The Dutch language of instruction primary school is primarily oriented to the needs and potential of Dutch-speaking higher class pupils; to a lesser extent the needs and potential of Papiamentu-speaking higher class pupils and Dutch-speaking lower class pupils. The school is almost not tuned to the needs and potential of Papiamentu-speaking lower class pupils. They are 'en masse' the victims of an educational system that insufficiently realizes its own deficit. in (Stuurgroep herstrukturering onderwijs, 1988, p. RE 25)

In chapter VIII.7 (pp. RE 71 - 75) the report focuses on the language of instruction. Providing an extensive overview of research, discussions and reflections on Papiamentu and the role of Papiamentu in education, the authors of the report concur that they have no pretense in adding to that body of publication but for their considerations on the basis of three reports: the 1976 UNESCO report "Education: Issues and Priorities

for Development" (UNESCO, 1976), the 1981 report "Ensenansa pa un i tur" (Beleidsnotacommissie, 1981) and the earlier mentioned report "Pa un ensenansa bilingual na Aruba" (Directie Onderwijs Aruba, 1988).

The authors of this report first make the point that up until the 1950s, Papiamentu was considered to be a mix of different languages that was relegated to the kitchen and garden, and even stood in the way of the development of decent proficiency in Dutch. However, throughout the years, Papiamentu had become the main language of communication in the media and in politics as a spin-off of the unregulated rise of local political and economic elites, and a withering influence of the Dutch in politics, governance and education. A second phenomenon that is pointed out in this report, is the rising academic interest in creole languages in general, and with regards to Papiamentu specifically. These studies would have debunked the misunderstandings and fables and lifted it, also in the mindsets of the population, to a full-fledged language, fit for all communicative purposes (pp. RE 72 - 73).

The report further describes the current practices as to the use of languages in education as based on Dutch as language of instruction, but with the use of Papiamentu to facilitate transfer of content in the classroom, despite the fact that the law prescribes monolingual Dutch medium of instruction education. Also, this report points out the dysfunctional nature of monolingual Dutch instruction and the need for the introduction of Papiamentu as language of instruction, not only referring to the publications on Papiamentu specifically (as described in

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chapter 4.4 of this book), but also explicitly referring to *The use of Vernacular Languages in Education* (UNESCO, 1953). Based on the insights gained from existing literature and studies, the report underwrites the sociolinguistic, cultural-political, developmental psychological and didactic considerations of the Comishon pa Introdukshon di Papiamento. On top of that, this report expresses the opinion that the development of Papiamento in itself and the relation of Papiamento to other languages in the Aruban society, make the choice for a full-fledged bilingual education system and against transitional bilingual education obvious. This would constitute the normalization of the existing situation of the use of Dutch as language of instruction in schools (p. RE 74). In a further elaboration on potential developments for the future, the committee foresees the gradual replacement of Dutch by English or Spanish (in 1988 Spanish was still a high status language in Aruba), but for the introduction of the new educational structure, the committee remains an advocate for bilingual primary education and Papiamento only Kindergarten or first cycle; for secondary education that prepares for higher education, Dutch should still remain the language of instruction on the basis of availability of educational materials, teacher training and study opportunities abroad; and for all other, including pre-school, special education and non-formal education, Papiamento should be the language of instruction (p. RE 75).

The section on the language of instruction concludes with a reflection on the diminishing role of Dutch in the Aruban society and the

expectation that in the future, Dutch will have a role as a historic language, just like in Indonesia. According to the report, English *must* and *will* replace Dutch, and that replacement by English - and in this consideration Spanish is mentioned as a potential replacement for Dutch too - will call for yet another considerable reform (p. RE 75).

The report concludes with a number of considerations on educational reform, including that, where at first a diachronous approach was envisioned, in reality a synchronous introduction of reforms will come to be, including the reform of continuous teacher training, the introduction of Papiamentu as language of instruction in the bilingual school, and a reform of vocational education (p. RE 89). These considerations sound hopeful in a young nation that had gained its Status Aparte less than 2 years before and would become an independent state 8 years later. That independence never came, and in 2020, the bilingual school was still taking its introductory steps.

Ervaringen en nieuwe denkbeelden in taalonderwijs en taalplanning

Six years after the publication of *Onderwijs 1988: Drie nota's*, little had changed. In October and November 1994, the teacher training institute Instituto Pedagógico Arubano, the department of education Directie Onderwijs and the main teacher's union SIMAR organized three study days in Aruba: *Ervaringen en nieuwe denkbeelden in taalonderwijs en taalplanning* (*Experiences and new notions in language education and*

language planning) and collected the outcomes of those study days in a publication of 115 pages (IPA, DO, & SIMAR, 1994). The short foreword to this booklet was a summary of the opening speech by the minister of welfare, Eddy Croes, also responsible for education. The full foreword reads:

A government language policy is an imperative. This policy has to aim at reform. In the past, there was a group of people who wanted to go back to the good old days. Nowadays, there is consensus on [the need for] educational reform. We need to find consensus on how and when to start with this. In any case, there is no more time for waste of talent, time and energy⁶¹ (Croes E. , 1994, p. 4).

Most contributions to this collection have a purely didactical, organizational or pedagogical nature. The first major section of this collection focuses on the use of languages in secondary education and Joyce Pereira discusses the *Issues of Dutch as subject matter and of Dutch in modern [foreign] languages and of Dutch in other subjects* (Pereira, 1994). She confirms that Dutch is a foreign language that plays

⁶¹ Noodzakelijk is een taalbeleid zijdens de regering. Dit beleid moet op vernieuwing gericht zijn. In het verleden bestond er nog een groep mensen die terug wilden naar de goede oude tijd. Tegenwoordig bestaat een consensus wat betreft vernieuwing van het onderwijs. Vastgesteld dient te worden hoe het onderwijs te vernieuwen en wanneer hiermee te beginnen. In ieder geval is er geen tijd meer voor verspilling van talent, tijd en energie.

a marginal role in the Aruban society, and the educational system does not heed that fact. Furthermore she confirms that the development of the proper mother tongue is not stimulated and that the existing language proficiency - pre-school - is neglected, that the Aruban education sector is not up to date on new visions in education, teachers have not received adequate training and the lack of implementation of didactic innovation, especially for foreign language didactics. Her contribution can be read as a rejection of the current (1994) educational system with Dutch as language of instruction and advocacy for democratization and inclusion of Papiamentu-speaking Aruban children. She proposes to draw inspiration from the shift in focus on language challenges for the integration of migrant communities in the Netherlands in the 1970s and 1980s.

***Protocol van Samenwerking op het
gebied van onderwijs tussen Aruba,
Nederland en de Nederlandse Antillen***

1996 would have been the year of the establishment of Aruba as an independent state. That was not the case, in 1993, the government led by Nelson Oduber, managed to annul the agreement with the Kingdom of the Netherlands and achieved the permanent establishment of Aruba as a constituent part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. This led to a reshuffle of collaboration agreements, including the agreements for collaboration in education. On March 1 - 5, an expert-conference for

education for participants from the three constituent countries of the Kingdom was organized in Curaçao. The closing statement makes very clear that this conference primarily aimed at higher education and educational mobility in the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Special mention was made of the collective aspiration to maximally utilize the cultural and linguistic diversity in order to reinforce the position of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in the world. On the closing day, the *Protocol van Samenwerking op het gebied van onderwijs tussen Aruba, Nederland en de Nederlandse Antillen (Protocol for collaboration in education between Aruba, the Netherlands and the Netherlands Antilles)* (1996) was signed by minister Eddy Croes, for Aruba, minister Jo Ritzen, for the Netherlands, and minister Martha Dijkhoff, for the Netherlands Antilles. This protocol pays attention to language in education:

Language matters.

The necessity of foreign language acquisition is recognized. Aruba and the Netherlands Antilles will remain dependent on other countries for higher education. This is why another language of instruction is chosen in secondary education. In the current circumstances, both countries choose for the maintenance of Dutch as language of instruction in secondary education. The Leeward islands may opt for English as language of instruction in secondary education.

The choice for the use of Dutch as language of instruction in secondary education sets high standards for language education in primary education in the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba. This means that for proficiency in Dutch, special standards are set in comparison to other foreign languages.

In addition to a further expansion of the mother tongues, primary education will emphasize acquisition of Dutch, at such a level that the connection with secondary education in the Netherlands is possible.

This is a clear and fundamental governmental shift away from the earlier plans that were drafted in 1981 and 1988 with a focus on the further introduction of Papiamentu/o and the disappearance of Dutch from the Antillean societies.

***Na caminda pa restructuracion di nos
enseñansa secundario general - Op weg
naar de herstructurering van het
algemeen voortgezet onderwijs - On the
road to reform of secondary education***

Before the 1996 collaboration protocol for education was signed, the Aruban government had instituted another reform committee: the

Steering Committee Reform of AVO⁶², also known as SHA (Stichting Herstructurering AVO) and in the same year PRIEPEB was installed: Proyecto Innovacion Enseñansa Preparatorio y Enseñansa Basico (Project for the reform of pre-school and primary education).

The first report of SHA was published in 1998 (Stuurgroep Herstructurering AVO, 1998) and laid the foundation for a complex redesign of Aruban secondary education. Rooting their advice in the 1976 UNESCO paper (UNESCO, 1976) 1981 (Beleidsnotacommissie, 1981) and 1988 (Comishon pa introdukshon di Papiamento, 1988) (Anon, 1988) (Stuurgroep herstrukturering onderwijs, 1988) reports on educational reforms, their task was the development and implementation of a new structure of secondary education in Aruba. Contrary to the approach laid out in the reform reports of 1988, SHA proposes to prioritize secondary education reform over primary education due to the perceived crisis in secondary education in the 1990s.

The report is titled *Na caminda pa restructuracion di nos enseñansa secundario general - Op weg naar de herstructurering van het algemeen voortgezet onderwijs - On the road to reform of secondary education* (Stuurgroep Herstructurering AVO, 1998) and provides an overview of bottlenecks in education: starting out from criticism on the 1968

⁶² AVO stands for *Algemeen Voortgezet Onderwijs*, Secondary education that prepares for higher education.

decision to continue adopting the Dutch educational model, the report criticizes the contextual inadequateness of the education system with limited connection with the Aruban culture as becomes apparent in teaching materials and language of education (p. 11) The use of Dutch as language of instruction is yet again named as the cause of inequality of opportunities for students that do not speak Dutch and one of the causes of the divide between the secondary schools and the home situation, as well as the cultural and societal isolation of the schools. Not only does the fact that the curricula and the handbooks come from the Netherlands have an alienating effect on the students, it also leads to a lack of ownership among the teachers as change cannot come from within the Aruban system (p. 12). As for the language of instruction the report states that

"The language of instruction in avo remains Dutch for now. This choice is unavoidable based on the continuity of education, teacher training, curriculum development, teaching materials, tests and further educational infrastructure. Dutch will be taught as a foreign language. Papiamentu receives its own, important position in the reformed avo, a position that does justice to its character as national language and bearer of the own cultural heritage and own identity" (p. 20)

This attention to the Papiamentu language would also support the development of Papiamentu as a language and in numbers of speakers, and it would facilitate the learning of foreign languages. (p. 20)

Other reports from the 1990s

In 1997 the Language Committee, published a report with the title *Proposal for a language policy for reformed primary education*⁶³ (Comision Modelo di Idioma, 1997). They also came to the conclusion that Papiamentu should play a much bigger role in primary education and that the system maintaining Dutch language of instruction had a negative effect on the development of Aruban primary school children. The discussions in which this report was presented were part of the national PRIEPEB discussion, the ambitious plan to improve the preparatory and primary education in Aruba through the stimulation and coordination of innovation. (Croes-Anthony, Duarte-Croes, Emerencia, Henriette, & Rosenstand, 1997)

In 1999 an education fair was organized in order of the royal visit. The fair took place from November 22 - 27 of that year, and all Aruban innovation projects presented their goals and plans. A booklet was published under the title *Aruban education in development*⁶⁴ (Commissie Koninklijk Bezoek 1999, 1999). The use of Dutch as a foreign language, as well as "the absence, and even denial of the own language and culture, ignoring multiculturalism and the effects of this for the cognitive, social and emotional development of the child" are some of the issues that addressed in the speech directed to the royal couple by

⁶³ Proposicion pa un maneho di idioma pa ensenanza basico renova di Aruba

⁶⁴ Het Arubaanse onderwijs in beweging

Joyce Pereira (1999 , p. 9). Other contributions in the same publication point out the lack of materials that are contextually adequate and/or are written in Papiamento (Bareño, 1999, p. 15) and the need for the development of these materials, as well as the "double burden for Aruban children in school that have to learn both a new linguistic system (Dutch) and new academic content" leading to almost 50% of children in primary education that have to repeat at least one year (Emerencia, 1999, p. 40). "Functional illiteracy, loss of talent and frustration of children and teachers" as well as "a fundamentally inappropriate study mentality of learning without understanding, not asking, dependency and passivity", "a severe erosion of the sense of dignity, self-image and safety" are the consequences of such a system (Emerencia, Het Arubaanse basisonderwijs (PRIEPEB), 1999, p. 41)

In the same year a report was published describing the efforts that had been done to introduce Papiamento as the language of instruction in schools in Aruba and, building on the past, a timeline and workplan for the factual introduction of Papiamento and language of instruction (Dijkhoff, Emerencia, & Groot, 1999).

Habri Porta pa nos Drenta

In 2001 and 2002 two versions of the *Habri Porta pa nos Drenta*⁶⁵ report of the Grupo di Modelo di Idioma (2001) (2002) were published. The

⁶⁵ *Open the door so we can come in*

2002 version, used for this analysis, is an expanded version of the 2001 version. The report contained the blueprint for the linguistic reform of primary education in Aruba. The report started out from 9 quotes, depicting the dysfunctional and devastating characteristics of Dutch medium of instruction schools in the ABC islands of the Netherlands Antilles by Anna Prins-Winkel (1983), and then shifts focus to Aruba alone, elaborating on the historical, political and linguistic backgrounds of the young nation. The Grupo Modelo di Idioma aims to achieve a language policy for primary education in Aruba that addresses the following aspects:

- "a. reflect the sociolinguistic reality of Aruba,
- b. Improves the quality of education in Aruba,
- c. creates optimal opportunity for a balanced and harmonious development of every child's capacities,
- d. makes use of the experience and knowledge of the child,
- e. keeps in mind the historic and socio-cultural context of Aruba,
- f. makes primary education accessible for all,
- g. promotes equality,
- h. contributes to a high-level learning process,
- i. guarantees optimal connectivity with secondary education,

j. leads to best results in learning all subjects,

k. improves children's possibilities to participate in Aruban, regional and global society" (p. 8).

The report recognizes that not only Papiamentu can play an important role for the further development of Aruba, Spanish and English are also recognized for their community and communication roles. The role of Dutch is described as limited to education, judiciary and *bureaucracy* as well as relations with the Netherlands and Surinam. For speakers of languages other than Papiamentu, a transition to Papiamentu in schools would be beneficial as they would learn Papiamentu in their environment as well as at school, as a second language, not a foreign language. Furthermore, the report emphasizes that 63 percent of the students that study in higher education with government funding, study in the Netherlands and 87% study in Dutch, but at the same time, only 21% of students that leave secondary education go on to study in the Netherlands (p. 12). A large group of students that leave secondary education (according to these calculations almost 70%) would not pursue further studies and went to work in tourism, care or in the commercial sector of the booming Aruban economy of the early 21st century.

Chapter 3 of the 2002 report treats a number of aspects of the introduction of Papiamentu as language of instruction in primary education, including pedagogic-didactic aspects - building on Cummins'

Common Underlying Proficiency model (Cummins, Primary language instruction and the education of language minority students, 1994); psychology of education - also making the point that in Aruba Papiamentu is not a minority language; ease of communication between teachers and students; and the politically unifying recognition of multilingual society (pp. 15-20). Chapter 4 (pp. 20-31) describes the foundations of the multilingual school model, starting from Papiamentu (including L2 Papiamentu for non-speakers of the language) and introducing the other three languages - Dutch, English and Spanish - through familiarization in the first year, later as foreign language subjects and finally as languages of instruction in the last years of primary education. The order by which these languages would be introduced in the curriculum would depend on whether priority would be given to the language of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Dutch, the language of globalization, English, or the most spoken foreign language in Aruba, Spanish (p. 23).

In the final chapter 6 (pp. 31-38), the preconditions for the establishment of the multilingual school are listed: political and financial support by the government; language planning for Papiamentu; community support; marketing for educational reform; support by departments; infrastructure; teacher training; materials development; and publication and promotion of reading (p. 32).

For the young and new state of Aruba, that was recuperating from the economic crisis of the previous decades, this educational reform was a

big endeavor. The ambitious character of this reform project made it difficult to convince skeptics of the value of the project.

Other reports after the year 2000

In 2003, Papiamentu became an official language in Aruba, next to Dutch (see chapter 4.2). As the language was officially recognized in law, it was expected that the accommodation of Papiamentu in education would follow soon. The *Habri Porta pa nos Drenta* (2002) and *SHA* (1998) policy papers became the foundations for reform thinking in the first two decades of the 21st century. The recommendations by SHA, maintaining Dutch as the language of instruction in secondary education and further strengthening the position of Papiamentu as a subject were gradually implemented in the first decade, starting in 2004. In its 2005 report *Nota Ciclo Avansa* (Stuurgroep Herstructurering AVO, 2005) the issue of *incomplete transfer* is addressed, especially for reading strategies where Aruban students would “not or insufficiently use the strategies that they have learned for Dutch, despite the fact that there is more than enough reason to do so (p. 20). No mention is made of the effect of the use of Dutch as language of instruction on this incomplete transfer. Earlier in the same document the maintenance of Dutch as language of instruction is rooted - *for now* - in the connectivity with higher education in the Netherlands, while acknowledging that there is a “growing Aruban awareness, which can be recognized in the position of Papiamentu getting stronger, in domains of learning with an Aruban

context, in the need for original teaching methods and in shifts in staffing in education" (p. 8).

The strategic national education plan 2007 - 2017 (Ministry of Education, Social Affairs and Infrastructure, 2007) describes the history of major innovation policy plans and notes as well as policy implementation up to 2006 (pp. 13-14) and celebrates numerous milestones in innovation. With respect to the use of languages in education, the policy concludes that "In addition to Dutch, Papiamentu is also used as the language of instruction in kindergarten" (p. 16) and "the question of language of instruction was identified by parents as a serious issue affecting student achievement. Parents highlighted that some of the teachers' poor language proficiency in languages, either Dutch, English, Spanish or even Papiamentu, contributed as a weakness to student's education." (p. 22). A main issue related to language identified in the report is the "Lack of commitment at the policy level to resolve educational language issues" (p. 45). The "lack of an established, agreed upon and uniformly enforced language of instruction policy" is seen as a core instructional issue that is recognized throughout society.

Furthermore, it points out that "many teachers use either Dutch or Papiamentu interchangeably at all educational levels. The arbitrary usage of Papiamentu as a language of instruction in the classrooms at all school levels leads to confusion among teachers, students and their parents" (p. 45). Therefore, the "teachers need to be proficient in the

language of instruction, Papiamento and Dutch" (p. 56) and students should "also [be] taught in Papiamento" (p. 64).

The implementation of multilingual primary education under the name Proyecto Scol Multilingual - PSML (Departamento di enseñansa Aruba, 2007) faced more delays: it was not until 2009 that it would be implemented as a pilot project starting from kindergarten in two primary schools. In reality, this was only a symbolic introduction as in kindergarten the language of instruction had been Papiamento until then. In 2012 the introduction of the multilingual school model in the same two pilot schools started and was completed in 2018.

In the meantime, other reports about education in Aruba incorporated an expected shift to Papiamento as language of instruction in the longer run, such as the 2008 and 2009 Adviesnota verlengde schooldag (Directie Onderwijs , 2008, p. 8) (Werkgroep verlengde schooldag, 2009, p. 14). In 2010 the Comunidad di Practica di Proyecto Scol Multilingual developed an extensive research action plan for the introduction of the pilot multilingual schools (Comunidad di Practica di Proyecto Scol Multilingual, 2010). This research project would be executed in collaboration between Instituto Pedagogico Arubano, University of Aruba and the University of Puerto Rico (IPA, 2012, p. 16). Later publications on the outcomes of the PSML were rooted in this research plan that unfortunately has only been partially completed.

The Eindrapportage Commissie Evaluatie Innovatie AVO (Commissie Evaluatie Innovatie AVO, 2011) reports on the state of secondary education in Aruba after the implementation of the educational reform in the first decade of the 21st century. It refers to the poor Dutch proficiency of pupils in Aruban primary education and the consequences this may have for educational success (p. 4). The language proficiency of the pupils is not the only linguistic obstacle mentioned: the Dutch language proficiency of the teachers that have received their teacher training in Aruba, at IPA, is stated to give rise to complaints. Another issue would be the fact that there is no perceived, formalized language policy (p. 4). The report states that the number of hours attributed to Dutch is too low (as well as for Mathematics and English) and signals that "Problems in [Dutch] proficiency form an obstacle for the student's learning process." (p. 7) as basic knowledge of the Dutch language would be very weak, vocabulary would be very limited, speaking and listening would be below par, technical reading competency would be ok but reading comprehension is not, the mother tongue method does not fit the target group and students miss a reading culture (p. 7). The committee has also made an inventory of complaints from parents, and one of the main complaints about the perceived challenges for the education system is that "Papiamentu is still too often used as language of instruction in class." (p. 7) The committee concludes that many of the challenges originate in primary education. Therefore they formulate an advice for primary education that includes the two following points of attention: Papiamentu, English and Spanish should be taught in a

uniform way, there should be more attention for Dutch language learning, especially vocabulary, language comprehension and comprehensive reading (p. 23). Furthermore they advise to increase the number of hours of Dutch in the first years of secondary education (pp. 24-25).

The Government of Aruba Education Vision and Policy 2013 – 2017 (Ministry of Education, Family Policy and Lifelong Learning, 2015) set out the governmental priorities for the timeframe mentioned. The document claims that one of the biggest assets of the Aruban population is its competence to speak multiple languages, underscoring the economic value of this multilingual ability. This same document recognizes the “ongoing debate regarding the language of instruction in schools” which is deemed to be “understandable given the many years invested in Dutch as the primary language of instruction in all schools.” (Ministry of Education, Family Policy and Lifelong Learning, 2015, p. 43) This does not lead to the conclusion that Papiamentu should be the language of instruction in schools but to the following conclusion: “(...) it is essential that we do not adopt a model that does not take into consideration the multicultural and multilingual nature of our population. Although it is true that for the majority the native language is Papiamentu, it is not the mother tongue of all children in Aruba. The multilingual school model must be flexible with regard to the primary language of instruction so that schools can select Papiamentu, English or Dutch as the primary language of instruction, while introducing other

languages such as Spanish, as secondary languages within Primary schools.” (Ministry of Education, Family Policy and Lifelong Learning, 2015, p. 44) The text continues with a call for all schools to make their *language selection* known by a certain date so they could start education in these languages in August 2016. This policy supports the Multilingual Schools, but at the same time it keeps all options for choice of a language of instruction open. It positions Spanish, the second most spoken mother tongue of the island, as a secondary language option and apparently not as a viable option for instruction language in primary education whereas the document suggests that that role could be fulfilled by English and Dutch. For secondary education, this vision and policy document does not mention any change in language policy, as such continuing the status quo of mainly Dutch medium instruction.

The 2016 *Advisory note for the establishment of a system of basic education for Aruba*⁶⁶ (den Hollander, Mes, Thijssen , & Clement, 2016) describes the plan and implementation of the revision of primary education in Aruba. This document echoes the UNESCO voices on language learning in a multilingual society (Hanemann & Scarpino, 2015) that additional language learning is most successful when the proficiency in the mother tongue is optimal and when the mother tongue is used as the language of instruction when learning the new language. They also confirm the close interrelation between culture and

⁶⁶ Adviesnota inrichting stelsel voor Basiseducatie Aruba

mother tongue and the importance this has for the cultural identity of the language learner. Following this reasoning the advisory note (den Hollander, Mes, Thijssen , & Clement, 2016, p. 32) concludes that the language of instruction for the new primary education system should be Papiamentu. The document also advises the translation of key documentation in Papiamentu (den Hollander, Mes, Thijssen , & Clement, 2016, p. 33) as well as the development of contextually adequate learning materials in Papiamentu and the specific training of teachers and support staff (p. 34).

Both the minister of education and the minister of culture of Aruba proclaimed the year 2018 to be the "Aña di Papiamentu", the year of Papiamentu, commemorating the legal recognition of Papiamentu as an official language of Aruba. During this year, a number of activities were organized, including the public celebration of the international mother language day (February 21), a Papiamentu fair (May 19) and a well visited two-day conference on Papiamentu as official language and the approval of the updated orthography of Papiamentu by Aruban parliament on November 1. Another major decision was taken in that year: in 2018 the general introduction of the multilingual school project in Aruban schools was announced (Fundacion Lanta Papiamentu, 2018).

Language in education has become part of the coalition agreement of the government formation: in 2017 the coalition agreement states: "Give Papiamentu it's deserved place in education, next to other languages. The policy for the Papiamentu language will be defined on

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the basis of the results of the pilot project 'Scol Multilingual' in primary schools. At the moment of implementation of Papiamentu in schools, funds will be allocated to realize that"⁶⁷ (Gobierno di Aruba, 2017, p. 23)

In March 2019 the Plan Educacion Nacional 2030 (PEN) was presented: a national education plan with a strong focus on online learning (Coördinatie team Nationaal Onderwijsplan 2030, 2019). The plan was written in Dutch, an additional summary was produced in English. This summary makes reference to the position of language in society and a direct link between language and identity as:

Our country is currently in the nation-building phase, where unity in diversity is expressed in national identity. Innovations in education, in areas such as Papiamentu, support this development and act as a unifying factor in our society. Education combines the Aruban identity - in terms of deep community roots, local language and culture - with an open attitude towards global developments. (Directie Onderwijs Aruba, 2019, p. 2)

⁶⁷ Duna Papiamentu su lugar mereci den enseñansa, banda di otro idioma. E maneho di idioma Papiamentu lo wordo defini basa riba e resultadonan di e proyecto piloto "Scol Multilingual" na scolnan basico. Na momento di e implementacion di Papiamentu na scolnan, lo aloca fondonan pa por realisa esaki.

It also points at a number of critical bottlenecks in Aruban development that are closely related to culture and identity:

There is a social crisis happening at the social level, and on an environmental level there is an imbalance with economic developments. In the cultural sphere, a perspective informed by the Aruban identity from different angles is important. The role of education in terms of the preservation and development of Aruban culture is of great importance (Directie Onderwijs Aruba, 2019, p. 2)

As such, in 2019, Papiamentu is positioned as a cornerstone of and a unifying factor in the Aruban society, and as a language that deserves due attention. Dutch, English and Spanish are not mentioned in the summary of the report.

The full report also mentions Papiamentu, especially when it comes to reference to the Aña di Papiamentu (p. 10), the importance of Papiamentu for identification and national identity (pp. 10, 29), the introduction of the multilingual school (p. 19) and the development of a Papiamentu language institute that would develop policy and safeguard Papiamentu (p. 50). Dutch, English and Spanish are only mentioned in relation to Papiamentu in the description of the Aruban multilingual school. The multilingual school project receives a new name in this document: Scol Arubano Multilingual (SAM). In the outputs of the new education plan, the results of the actions are clearly described: the

result of the introduction of the Scol Arubano Multilingual is that "student study in Papiamentu" (p. 50). These goals form part of a list of six pages of goals (pp. 46-51) that will have to be realized in the upcoming years.

4.3 Research publications on language policy and practice in Aruba

This section provides a historical overview of research outputs on the adequateness of the use of Dutch as language of instruction in the predominantly Papiamentu speaking societies of Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao.

As may be clear, the position of the different languages in the island territories of the former Dutch Caribbean has been subject of discussion. The 2005 *Bibliography of the Papiamentu Language* (Coomans-Eustatia, 2005) lists 295 pages of publications on Papiamentu, attempting to "include all linguistic, historical linguistic and sociolinguistic references to Papiamentu" (p. 9). It is by no means the intention to refer to all these works and contributions in this section, however, it is the intention to demonstrate that, throughout the ages, researchers, journalists and opinion makers have made a point of the exceptional character of the problematic and uncomfortable position of Papiamentu and its speakers, especially in education, in the Antillean societies.

Opinions on the position of the different languages and the proficiency in Dutch in particular in the former colony of Curaçao and dependencies date back to the 19th century. These opinions are usually not favorable for the status and use of Papiamentu, on the contrary. Some 19th

century reflections on the “annoying popularity of the vernacular” (Putte, 1997) mention the failure of the Dutch to impose their language (Bosch, 1829, p. 215), and the regret that that barbaric language has not disappeared yet. On the contrary it appears as if the creoles do the best they can to perpetuate that bastard-language (Dissel, 1857, p. 130). The Papiamentu language is classified as “the sound of a turkey” and “unbearable cackling for the finer ear of the European” by the first Dutch schoolmaster to teach in Curaçao after the English rule of 1807 - 1816 (Paddenburgh, 1819)

In *Een ernstig woord over een ernstig onderwerp*, A.M. Chumaceiro, the secretary of the School Committee for Curaçao and dependencies that was instated in 1882, reflects on the inadequacy of Dutch teaching materials and handbooks in the society in Curaçao, as well as the inadequacy of teaching a foreign language, Dutch, without using Papiamentu. (Chumaceiro A.C., 1884).

This inadequacy was further specified in 1896, when Hamelberg stated that “only if the population can read and write proficiently in their own language, one could work on the expansion of another language”⁶⁸ (Hamelberg, 1896-1897).

⁶⁸ “Eerst als de bevolking haar eigen taal vloeiend kan lezen en schrijven, kan er met vrucht gewerkt worden aan de verbreiding eener andere taal.”

The same Hamelberg was intrigued by the fact that children of "pure Dutch parents would prefer to speak Dutch amongst each other, probably explained by the fact that Papiamentu is less complex and can be more easily be pronounced than Dutch." (Hamelberg, 1896-1897) He mentions that many consider Papiamentu to be a mix of languages, and as such not a language in its own right. He disagrees though, as it would not be possible to decide of which language Papiamentu would be a dialect, it is a language in its own right, "bastardized, poor, handicapped, [...]" (Hamelberg, 1896-1897)

In a publication from 1897, Jesurun regretted the survival of the vernacular [Papiamentu] as it was a threat to learning Dutch and developing proficiency in Dutch or other languages. In his explanation, he calls Dutch the mother tongue (Jesurun, 1897, p. 96)

In 1905, J.H.M. Chumaceiro, a pastor, reflected that the popular opinion would be that "Not only does the general opinion call for abolition of Papiamentu, it demands it!" (Chumaceiro J. , 1905). He further reports that in catholic schools classes were taught in Papiamentu, not even a language according to Chumaceiro, and contrary to the national, Dutch, ideal. In his description of language skills of the population of Curaçao, het mentions proficiency in 1. Spanish, 2. English and 3. Dutch (p. 157) He concludes his contribution with the following words: " [...] we have demonstrated that Papiamentu has no literature to speak of, barring some little school books of a religious nature, used in the Roman Catholic schools. We can conclude that , because of the utter lack of any

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characteristics in Papiamentu that would civilize the less civilized, there is colossal opportunity for the Dutch language [...]" (p. 158)

It may be clear that there was not only rejection of Papiamentu: before 1863, Papiamentu was used for Roman Catholic catechisms and for Sunday-schools. The colonial government however, expected regular education in schools to use Dutch. At the end of the 19th century, it became clear that the widespread introduction of Dutch had failed. The way in which this failure would have to be addressed was not clear. In the education policy of 1907 teaching was assumed to be "as much as possible in Dutch" in order to receive subsidies. But soon, one thing became clear: the ministry for colonial affairs prescribed as of 1915 that all education should be in Dutch. It was not until 1935 that Papiamentu could be used in specific classes with special permission from the governor. Until 1954, the year of the establishment Charter for the Kingdom of the Netherlands and of the birth of the Netherlands Antilles, nothing really changed (Putte, 1997, pp. 264-268).

In 1955 Nelly Winkel published a first article on the language problem in the Antillean schools (Winkel, 1955) in which she presented the challenges for the use of Dutch as language of instruction from legal, governmental, historical, didactic and pedagogical perspectives. The legal perspective she refers to is straightforward: Art. 36 of Publicatieblad #43, 1935 states "The language of instruction in education is Dutch. For the northern Antillean islands education may be partially or fully provided in English, upon the instructions of the

governor"⁶⁹. She further elaborates on the reflections of the inspector of education for the Netherlands Antilles who would have stated that this is due to the "large difference between English and Papiamentu, between the world language that can bring economic prosperity for the population, and the local country speak⁷⁰, that has no extensive literature and consists mainly of oral production" The same inspector acknowledges that the use of Dutch as language of instruction is "actually contrary to the principal fundamentals of didactics". (p. 68)

Nelly Winkel advocates starting education in the national language, the home language of the children in the Antillean schools, and she advocates bilingual education for later academic success. She bases her findings on the insight that teaching materials in Dutch lack contextual relevance for the children, that teaching in a foreign language is only language oriented and does not enable other core competency learning. She continues with the insight that the claims that Papiamentu would be a language that "is unfit for learning to think", and that introducing Papiamentu in primary education, would be a means to keep people "stupid" are not acceptable. On the contrary though, there might be drawbacks in teaching in the language of the country, exclusively

⁶⁹ Nelly Winkel incorrectly refers to Art 36 published in the *Publicatieblad 34, 1936*.

⁷⁰ The Dutch word used is 'landsspraak', a rare and unusual term is contrasting with 'taal', language.

teaching in a foreign language would be didactically irresponsible (p. 74).

Nelly Winkel repeated her disapproval with the use of Dutch in the first years of primary education, providing ample examples on the challenges children in school experienced with Dutch as language of instruction, and the inequalities between the - majority - of Papiamentu speaking children and the - minority - of Dutch speaking children (Winkel, 1956). The introduction to this edition of the magazine in which this contribution was published, Christoffel, challenges the former inspector of education who would have stated that using Dutch as language of instruction from the first year onwards was "a successful experiment in the Berlitz method" (Christoffel, 1956)

In the same edition of Christoffel, frère Evonius and frère Martinus elaborate on their experience with teaching in the first year of primary education. Their short evaluation is much more positive: the first instructions in school, greeting and the order to sit down, are given in both languages, and most school words in Papiamentu are Dutch anyway, so familiar for the children in class. And, if they have no knowledge of Dutch whatsoever as they have not been in Kindergarten, they are a *tabula rasa* for Dutch. They acknowledge that in this case, going from the known to the unknown, builds on very little known. Therefore, the task of the teacher is very heavy, but also very important (Evonius & Martinus, 1956, p. 447) They continue with a reflection on the characteristics of languages, and the lack of certain linguistic

aspects, like the presumed absence of articles and the lack of conjugation of verbs, as a source for contamination of Dutch. Apart from that, according to the authors, the intelligence of first year pupils has steadily declined since the start of the last world war and the number of pupils in classes is way too high (p. 448). They provide the reader with a number of attention points, starting with the fact that teachers should not unthinkingly use Dutch educational materials but should be looking for contextually adequate materials; teachers should pay extra attention to pronunciation of specific phonemes that are unfamiliar to the Antillean children; and teacher should focus on understanding more than on technical reading (pp. 448 - 449). To conclude, they list a number of arguments why the use of Dutch as language of instruction would not be the origin of the challenges in education in Curaçao: the lack of qualified teachers, the young age at which children are allowed to go to primary education and the lack of compulsory education are the main reasons for the decline of education (p. 450).

In 1969, Julius de Palm presented and published his PhD, titled *Het Nederlands op de Curaçaose school (Dutch in the schools of Curaçao)* (Palm, 1969). De Palm describes the "horrifying denial of educational principles" (education building on and aligning with the context of the child, as well as the careful alignment between development of the child and the character and dosage of teaching material) as Papiamentu speaking children are not allowed to express themselves in their own

language in school, and can not express themselves in the foreign language, Dutch, potentially leading to frustration, nervousity, confusion and an inferiority complex. Only 24% of the children in Antillean schools make it through to the sixth and final year of primary without a delay, as opposed to 60% in the Netherlands. For de Palm, this leads to the conclusions that the focus should be on accommodating the Antillean children in the bilingual classroom, starting from Papiamentu as language of instruction, teaching Standard Dutch as a subject, before using it as a language of instruction (Wouters, 1969).

Another key publication was the 1973 dissertation by Anne Prins-Winkel (Prins-Winkel A. , 1973), she pointed out that the use of Dutch as the language of instruction in Aruban schools was not successful and would deserve another approach. Until the present day, advocates of Papiamentu language of instruction education refer to this publication to underscore the authority and longevity of the claim for mother tongue education in the ABC-islands. This position was further elaborated on in *Latent Taaltalent* (Prins, 1975), with as subtitle: *About the poor treatment of a mother tongue*⁷¹. This analysis points out the ideological embeddedness of the maintenance of Dutch as language of instruction in the Netherlands Antilles in the "ideal of the Netherlands under a tropical sun" (p. 7). He claims to make a "modest attempt to improve the status of Papiamentu and to unmask the Dutch illusion of

⁷¹ *Over de stiefmoederlijke behandeling van een moedertaal*

superiority on the use of the Dutch language" (p. 7) He demonstrates that the "Dutch language primary school is a language deprived school for the child that speaks Antillean because of the limited language offer. A language deprived school in which didactics are used that hardly pay attention to the differences between mother tongue acquisition and foreign language acquisition." He continues that "An important step to be taken in the reform of the Antillean primary education will be the reform from a Dutch language of instruction school to a mother tongue school" (p. 64).

The number of publications on this topic in the 1970s and 1980s is representative for the active and multifaceted discussion on LPP in the Antilles and the involvement of many professionals and specialist that participated in the discussion. The 2005 Bibliography of the Papiamentu Language (Coomans-Eustatia, 2005) lists almost 300 pages of written contributions, including dissertations, books and research papers. Nelson Coffie discussed the consequences of the bilingual character of the Antillean society and education system (Coffie, 1970). Enrique Muller published a design for a Papiamentu based primary school for the Netherlands Antilles (Muller, 1975). Anne Prins-Winkel published *Mitonan* (Prins-Winkel A. , 1982) on the failure of the Dutch colonial school system in the Antilles, the contents of which had also been presented at the Conference on Papiamentu, Papiamentu at the University of the Netherlands Antilles by the Institute for the promotion

and study of Papiamentu⁷² in June 1981 (Prins-Winkel A. , 1983). Pancho Geerman concluded in his thesis that the Aruban education system and the use of language in the Aruban education system contributed to the reproduction of social inequality in Aruba (Geerman, 1982) and argues on the basis of Dumont (1978) that the use of Dutch in education in Aruba is a "violation of the psychology, pedagogy and didactics" (p. 46).

Also in the 21st century the debates went on. According to Hulst (2002) the social inequality that Geerman (1982) grounded in the education system would further lead to the disintegration of the Antillean social cohesion on the basis of a disrespect for the Antillean culture and language. Jennifer Herrera (2003) studied the relation between "language planning and education in Aruba" for her dissertation and came to the conclusion that "it is taking too long": "a majority of the government officials, linguists, administrators, educators, parents, teachers and plan developers agree that the Aruba language in education plan is developing at a slow and steady rate; however, their desire is to see more change happen more quickly" (Herrera, 2003, p. 156).

The education systems in Curaçao and Bonaire went through educational reforms in which the roles of the different languages shifted towards a more Papiamentu based education system in the former

⁷² Instituto pa Promoshon i Estudio di Papiamentu

Netherlands Antilles and Curaçao and back to a more Eurocentric Dutch education system in Bonaire. These evolutions influenced the discussions on language and education in Aruba as is reflected in chapter 5 of this book. These evolutions were documented by Rosita Tormala-Nita (2007), Ronald Severing and Christa Weijer (2008), Kevin Carroll (2009), Maxy Bak-Piard (2010), Ronald Severing and Christa Weijer (2010) and Ronald Severing (2017).

The role of Papiamentu as identity marker was studied by Keisha Wiel who concluded that "speaking Papiamentu both gives [...] a sense of belonging and helps [...] to be considered an Aruban or Curaçaoan" (Wiel, 2011, p. 49) During her research she found that "while attitudes behind Papiamentu as a cultural element may be positive, other attitudes concerning Papiamentu [...] in education and other 'official' settings may not be as favorable. In this respect, while Papiamentu may be seen as a language in its own right, it is often seen as a language that is somehow not complete and not adequate for some purposes" (Wiel, 2011, p. 50). This lack of recognition for the language by the population is also recognized by Pereira who concludes "that language awareness is at a very low level in Aruba, in all sectors" and proposes that "Prestige and Image planning, must be given priority. Promotional and informational activities with a focus on the community and its mentality and attitude are vital to the preservation and development of Papiamentu." (Pereira, 2018, p. 113) This call for awareness resonates her earlier appeals for "a comprehensive, holistic approach to language

planning and policy that actively mobilizes all sectors of the community [... to] assure that real changes occur in Arubans' awareness, mentality and attitudes concerning language and education." (Pereira, 2011, p. 292) This comprehensive and holistic approach would serve to address what Pereira refers to as "a long festering wound" of Dutch-only education (Pereira, 2010, p. 92), and the exclusion of Papiamentu that is seen as the "source of many educational problems and as discriminatory and anti-democratic" (Pereira, 2018, p. 70).

The importance of Papiamentu and attitudes towards Papiamentu in different domains of language use was further studied and reported on with respect to the media (Lasten & Tromp-Wouters, 2011), in society (De Cuba-Arendsz, 2012), with respect to higher studies in the Netherlands (Kester & Fun, 2012), in secondary education (Fernandes Perna-Silva, 2015), the linguistic landscape (Bamberger, Mijts, & Supheert, 2016) and in higher education in Aruba (Fernandes Perna-Silva, 2019). The growing insights into translanguaging as social practice and as an education tool (Williams, 2017) finally led to the further development and implementation of the Skol Multilingual in primary education, a Mother Tongue Based Multi Lingual Education system that started as a pilot project in 2012 and the general introduction of which was announced in 2017 (Croes, Richardson, & Williams, 2010) (Croes R. , 2011) (Croes R. , 2017) (Pereira, 2018)

Not all agree that the key to successful development of education lies in strengthening the position of Papiamentu in schools. On the contrary,

they focus on strengthening of Dutch proficiency in education through the use of Dutch as language of instruction or through the use of the mother tongue as a starting point of achieving sufficient proficiency in Dutch. This is strongly supported by Juana Kibbelaar who warns for the challenges that come with the introduction of Papiamentu in schools (Kibbelaar, 2012, p. 3). In a later publication she recognizes that "students and teachers are in a downward spiral with respect to knowledge development, leading to impactful consequences for educational success. [...] the ongoing language problems lead to insecurity, frustration and apathy" (Kibbelaar, 2017, p. 65) She considers the fact that a larger part of the world's population has no access to education in the home language as a normality. Studying in a foreign language should not limit educational attainment of children in schools, on the contrary: it exposes them to possibilities in higher learning that the home language could not provide (p. 59). The bar of education should be raised, as children would have to be exposed to at least 8000 contact hours of education in Dutch in primary schools (p. 58). As Papiamentu would be dependent on a knowledge base in a foreign language, insufficient knowledge of that foreign language would limit access to knowledge and would impair the possibilities to communicate about that knowledge in the home language. (p. 62) In a series of three publications in 2019 she points out that "The available materials in Papiamentu stand in no comparison to those from larger languages." (Kibbelaar, 2019a, p. 27) and "insufficient proficiency in Dutch is a threat to broader knowledge development" and education in Papiamentu

would limit access to knowledge (p. 28). She warns for negligence of the importance of Dutch in the introduction of Papiamentu as language of instruction in schools, as that would limit access to knowledge and the population of the islands would be limited to sources in Papiamentu (Kibbelaar, 2019b, p. 26). In a third contribution from 2019, she concludes that the development of a well-educated population and the further development of the Papiamentu language could go hand in hand. In the postcolonial education model, the neglected position of Dutch in primary education has led to arrears in development that can barely be repaired. As such, it is "essential to prioritize the development of language proficiency in Dutch. If Dutch can not be the basis of knowledge, Papiamentu will not be able to benefit from that" (Kibbelaar, 2019c, p. 29).

The new constitutional developments in the Kingdom of the Netherlands leading up to the dissolution of the Netherlands Antilles and the integration of the islands of Bonaire, Saba and Sint Eustatius (BES-islands) in the country of the Netherlands on October 10, 2010 (10-10-10) have led to a new and increased involvement of Dutch policy institutions in the discussions on the language of instruction in schools in the islands. These policy documents and research influence the discourse on LPP in education on the other islands as well. Without going into detail, it is useful to mention a few as they are illustrative for the continuing paralyzing debate on the use of languages in education in the Caribbean part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. In the

controversial 2014 advice *Nederlands op zijn BEST* (Taalunie, 2014), the need for other approaches in education was recognized but the role of Dutch as language for education in Bonaire was reconfirmed and the role of Papiamentu was - raising some very critical reviews - primarily reserved for the construction of identity. The main focus of the final advice from the Taalunie is on the position of Dutch, not on the balance between the languages used and the socio-economic development of the youth of the islands. The Taalunie report was critically received by Caribbean expert groups that had to shed light on the strong public Caribbean reactions towards the report (Expertgroepen Nederlands en Papiamentu, 2015). Their analysis, as well as the analysis by the European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning (Sterk & Van der Meer, 2016) further illustrate the distances that have to be bridged between the different opinions and ideologies. For Saba and Statia another path was chosen: the advice from the advisory committees that researched the position of and attitude towards the languages of instruction (Faraclas, Kester and Mijts, 2013) was followed by the 2014 feasibility study (Drenth, Allen, Meijnen, & Oostindie, 2014) and resulted in the advice and, finally, decision to implement English as the language of instruction in primary and secondary education in Sint Eustatius and to continue this practice Saba. In this system, Dutch would be offered as a "strong" foreign language. Interesting in this process is the fact that despite all evidence available in literature, three different consecutive advisory committees and these reports were necessary for the policy makers to reach this decision.

In the past decade a number of European students have come to Aruba to conduct undergraduate or graduate research projects within the framework of an exchange program with Utrecht University under the supervision of the author of this study. Some of these students studied different aspects of language use in Aruban society and institutions, including a study on the alignment between Aruban language policies and language attitudes (Leuverink, 2012), a study on text comprehension and language attitudes among Aruban high school students at different levels in the Aruban classroom (Sollie, 2015a) (Sollie, 2015b), a study on the preferred language of instruction in higher education in Aruba (Vasić, 2016), a study on the role of languages in Aruba's linguistic landscape (Bamberger, 2016) (Bamberger, Mijts, & Supheert, 2016) and a study on adolescent perceptions on language and professional communication (Ngizwenayo, 2017).

Kitty Leuverink came to the conclusion that her respondents expressed preference for Dutch as language of instruction in all segments of education, despite the fact that Papiamentu was the home language of the majority of the respondents and the respondents reported to hardly use Dutch outside of school. Leuverink observed more paradoxes: respondents would indicate that they identify with Papiamentu, but would prefer to communicate in English, and expect that Dutch and Spanish will disappear from Aruba. In conclusion she states that respondents attach emotional value to Papiamentu and practical value to Dutch and English, where the practical value of Dutch lies in

education and the practical value of English lies in the entrepreneurial domain. Choices for Papiamentu would be ideological, choices for Dutch and English would be pragmatic (2012, pp. 92-93). Leuverink's respondents did not recognize the pragmatic value of Papiamentu, and when studying Aruba's language policies she concluded that these follow the same lines: choices for Papiamentu are framed as an ideological choice, choice for Dutch would be pragmatic. She concludes that the language policies of Aruba generally reflect the language attitudes of the community (p. 94).

The research project by Vasić (2016) was based upon an online survey, focus group interviews and participatory observation among students in higher education. Similar to Leuverink (2012) she wanted to find an answer to the question "which language(s) are preferred by the Aruban students as the language of instruction in higher education?" (p. 25) Her respondents indicated the importance Dutch and English for future plans, but in general they preferred English over Dutch as language of instruction in higher education. Reportedly, Aruban students indicated that it would be important to learn Papiamentu to develop and improve the language (p. 35) Just like Leuverink (2012) indicated, the choice for Papiamentu would be of a more ideological nature, and would in this case not even be aimed at benefiting the speaker, but the language itself.

Florianne Sollie (2015b) focused on text comprehension in the four main languages used in Aruba, Papiamentu, Spanish, English and Dutch. Sollie

conducted a comparative study among students at different levels of the third year of secondary education. She concluded that Dutch as the language of instruction negatively influences students' performance, but that students are clearly not aware of this influence. Moreover, students would attribute failure to their own lack of competence rather than - at least in part - to the linguistic situation (p. 43). Her tests demonstrated that English is the reading language in which students understand most from the texts presented to them, the second and third best languages in which the students understand texts are Dutch and Papiamentu, there was no significant difference in performance between those two languages, and comprehension in Spanish was clearly less (p. 39). These findings were alarming, as they point out that text comprehension in the language to which these students have been exposed as language of instruction for nine years is significantly less than in a foreign language, albeit English. A second alarming finding is that the students performed less in their home language than in that foreign language. These findings point out the fundamental challenges for the Aruban education system, as the students are not formally trained in their own language, hence lower scores in Papiamentu, are exposed to Dutch as a language of instruction but are not trained in that language as a foreign language, hence lower scores in Dutch, but are trained in English as a foreign language, hence higher scores for English. The lower scores for Spanish may be attributed to the low status of Spanish and the fact that less class time is dedicated to Spanish in schools.

As language attitudes can also be related to perceptions of language use, Zita Ngizwenayo conducted a research to find out "to what extent is the students' perception of language use in professional settings in line with reported language use" (Ngizwenayo, 2017, p. 77). She concluded that respondents would indicate that Dutch and English have a more instrumental role in society, but do recognize the importance of all four languages for Aruba. Dutch would be associated with higher power and authority, and Spanish was reported to hold the lowest status. Papiamento would be most important in verbal communication. (p. 88) When asked to rank languages, students would report that English would be most important for a future job, followed by Dutch, Spanish and Papiamento (p. 87). This finding indicates that respondents attribute less of a pragmatic value to the language.

The research project by Fardau Bamberger focused on the linguistic landscape of Aruba, first focusing on English (Bamberger, 2016) and then widening it to the four main languages in Aruban society (Bamberger, Mijts, & Supheert, 2016). Her research points out that the most used written language in the public sphere is English, followed by Papiamento. Dutch is present in the linguistic landscape, however, it is almost exclusively used for *top-down* communication. Dutch is often accompanied by another language, usually English or Papiamento. Spanish is least used, and almost exclusively used for *bottom-up* communication (Bamberger, Mijts, & Supheert, 2016). Their findings

point at the institutionalized nature of the use of Dutch and confirm the status of Dutch as a foreign language.

4.4 In conclusion

This chapter contains a study of three top-down discourses on the use of language in Aruban - and formerly Antillean - society: law, policy and academic research. The legislation presented in section 4.1 allow for the conclusion that a gradual process of legal emancipation of Papiamentu is taking place, but that the legal stipulations carry a strong colonial imprint that still excludes the Papiamentu from use in important terrains and positions Papiamentu in some cases as an exception rather than the norm.

The study of policy on language and education presented in section 4.2 further demonstrates that it can not be said that the topic of language in education has not been given attention. However, simultaneously it can be concluded that despite very clear assessments that point out the negative effects of the maintenance of Dutch as language of instruction the *status quo* was maintained over the decades of decolonial development. Apart from that, it becomes clear that time and again the decision to conform to the status quo - or to not take decisions at all - has been given preference over complex educational reform at the benefit of future generations.

Finally, the review of publications in section 4.3 from Aruban and Antillean researchers as well as from researchers from outside of the region demonstrates that the topic of language in education has received an impressive amount of attention throughout the 20th and 21st century. The authors cited in this section are in general in alignment with regards to the use, status and future of Papiamentu in Aruban society, also when it comes to its role in education. However, yet again, this study also reveals that the response to these voices has been slow, reflecting the colonial imprint of conformity to the former colonizer's practices rather than addressing the decolonial crisis in education and, subsequently, crisis in society.

Chapter 5: Discourse on LPP and language practice in Aruba - bottom-up perspectives

This chapter will consist of a presentation of the bottom-up perspectives on LPP, including a thematical analysis and discussion of the data with a focus on the diachronous nature of the discourse, the recurrence of the themes throughout discourses of different nature as well as the strength and consistency of the beliefs about language and education from different perspectives. The data consists of media coverage, reader's letters, contributions in union's magazine and social media discussions.

5.1 Introduction

Chapter 4 contained a representation of top-down and institutional contributions to LPP: legislation, policy and institutionalized research. Chapter 5 contains a representation of bottom-up contributions that relate to LPP: reader's letters and contributions from the written media

and social media discussions. The reader's letters are selected from a body of written media contributions, both from newspapers (Extra and Amigoe) and the magazine of the teacher union Sindicato di Maestro di Aruba (SIMAR): Skol I Komunidat (School and Community) that span the era of Aruba's Status Aparte and semi sovereign existence as a country within the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The social media discussions are more recent due to the character of the medium and allow for an understanding of current popular beliefs and assumptions on LPP. Three critical junctures were identified in the previous chapters: the presentation of the 3 reports on educational reform by *Stuurgroep herstrukturering onderwijs* in 1988, the announcement of the pilot project *Proyecto Scol MultiLingual* (PSML) in 2012 and the announcement of the introduction of Papiamentu as language of instruction in all primary education in 2017. All major newspapers were scanned in the month preceding and after the identified critical junctures and the findings are presented in section 5.2. As Facebook is the dominant social media platform used in Aruba, the discussions on these topics on that medium were mapped and the findings of this mapping are presented in section 5.3.

5.2 The written media

The magazine of the Aruban Teachers Union SIMAR⁷³ was published from 1969 until 1975 under the name of VORM, and onwards until 1989 under the name *Skol I Komunidat* (School and Community). As gatekeepers of the use of languages in education, the voice of the teachers and education professionals from the field is a main form of input for the understanding of beliefs and ideologies on the use of languages. As the magazine attempted to represent all voices, it contains written dialogues between stakeholders that represent the different points of view in an unpolished and unfiltered way. The contributions that relate to LPP are mainly concerned with standardization of Papiamentu, language proficiency in general and language of instruction.

An anonymous contribution to the 1986 October issue of *Skol I Komunidat* reflects on the introduction of Papiamentu as a subject in schools in Curaçao. The author supports this introduction and proposes that Aruba would follow this idea, potentially as a “transitory phase to achieve 'Papiamentu as language of instruction'?”⁷⁴ (Anon., 1986, p. 14) Lamenting that apart from the progress that the committee for standardization is making, all other committees are not producing

⁷³ Sindicato di Maestro di Aruba

⁷⁴ "un fase 'transitorio' pa yega na 'Papiamentu komo idioma di instruction'?"

outputs, the author sees no action for the introduction of Papiamento in schools and concludes that “in this matter it is the government that is the institution that has to take the decision, the sooner the better!!”⁷⁵ (p. 14) The October issue of *Sandl* was the last issue for a while, it was not until March 1988 that the next issue of *Sandl* was published.

In May 1988, the education reform reports by the *Stuurgroep herstrukturering onderwijs* (see section 4.2 of this publication) would be published. The editorial of the March 1988 issue, written by the board of SIMAR, reflects on the complexities of the Status Aparte and the lack of the union's participation in decision making, and lists as one of the key issues “When will the DECISION to introduce PAPIAMENTO in schools be taken?”⁷⁶ (SIMAR, 1988) In a reader's letter, Tineke Pengel addresses the status of Dutch in education: “Language is another problem: here, Dutch is dead. Many teachers try to remedy that by speaking Papiamento in class, only making matters worse.”⁷⁷ According to her, teachers should exclusively stick to Dutch as language of

⁷⁵ "I den e asunto aki e ta gobierno ta e instansia ku mester tuma decision i mas lihé esey tuma lugá, mas mihó!!"

⁷⁶ "Ki dia ta tuma DESISHON pa introdusi PAPIAMENTO na skol?"

⁷⁷ "De taal vormt een ander probleem: het Nederlands is hier dood. Heel wat leerkrachten proberen het te verhelpen door het Papiaments te gebruiken, wat de zaak alleen maar erger maakt."

instruction, but “unfortunately, some teachers are not sufficiently proficient in Dutch”⁷⁸ (Pengel, 1988, p. 19).

In the first issue of 1989 educational professional and policy advisor Ralph van Breet reflects on the lessons Aruba can learn from Curaçao when it comes to the introduction of Papiamentu in schools. His main point is that a balance needs to be struck between a perfectionist preparation of the introduction of Papiamentu as an official language and as language of instruction, and an overly hasty introduction which would lead to a multitude of issues (Van Breet, 1989, p. 18). What these issues might be, is not specified in the contribution. The three reports on educational reform that were published as one volume in 1988 get little explicit attention in *Skol I Komunidat*, apart from some reflections on the administrative nature of the educational reform. The reports do get attention in the local newspapers though.

The *Corant* of June 10, 1988 devotes a full page to the description of the content of the reports (Corant, 1988), recognizing that education is a focal point for the government. One of the main points that this contribution highlights is the introduction of bilingual education to accommodate the multilingual reality of Aruba in “a global plan to solve the problem of language in education” (Corant, 1988, p. 9). The same week, the *Corant* of June 13 reports about an event at which the

⁷⁸ "Helaas beheersen bepaalde leerkrachten het Nederlands ook niet helemaal."

management of Aruban culture was celebrated. At that event, the Aruban minister of wellbeing Mito Croes, would have stated “For a long time we have treated our own language as inferior, incomplete and have even gone as far as to deny calling it a language.”⁷⁹ This sentiment of oppression and negligence was illustrated by including a poem from the Aruban poet Federico Oduber:

⁷⁹ "Pa hopi tempo nos a trata nos propio idioma como inferior, incompleto i hasta a nenga di yame idioma"

<p>Mi lenga conoce amor Mi lenga conoce dolor Mi lenga conoce duna Mi lenga conoce tuma Mi lenga conoce Shon Mi lenga conoce Pasion anto mi lenga no ta mi lenga? (Corant, 1988)</p>	<p>My language knows love My language knows pain My language knows giving My language knows taking My language knows my Lord My language knows Passion so why is my language not my language?⁸⁰</p>
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⁸⁰ Translation by Eric Mijts

The Diario newspaper of June 9, 1988, also reported on the presentation of the educational reform plans in 1988. The newspaper focuses, among other things, on the achievement of completing the reform plans and on the emphasis that minister Mito Croes laid on the “necessity of national consensus”⁸¹ and on the fact that “it would be impermissible that any group in society or in politics would mess with education, and as such with the future of our society.”⁸² (1988, p. 2) In that same issue, the plans for the new pedagogic academy (also presented in the three reform reports) are elaborated upon as well (1988, p. 7).

Six days later, the same newspaper includes a letter to the editor by Hyacintho Geerman who draws attention to the fact that Aruban institutions discriminate against the Papiamentu language as apparently in the Aruban new corporate legislation that regulates the new Aruba Exempt Corporation, the name of this legal entity is provided in Dutch, English and Spanish, but not in Papiamentu. This leads the writer to reflect that “The makambas⁸³ that have helped draft this legislation deserve praise, as they have defended their mother tongue, Dutch, but the Arubans that have been sitting at their side subjectively mentally dominated, like slaves in the past.”⁸⁴ (Geerman, 1988, p. 15)

⁸¹ "Mester tin un concenso nacional"

⁸² "No ta permisibel cu ningun grupo den comunidad o den politica, hunga cu enseñanza y cu esey cu futuro di nos comunidad."

⁸³ pejorative reference to European Dutch citizens.

⁸⁴ "E macambanan cu a yuda traha e ley aki, merece elogio, pasobra nan si ta defende nan leguage madre Hulandes, pero Arubianonan sinta na nan lado ta subjectivamente domina mentalmente, manera catibunan den pasado."

The *Diario* of June 5, 1988 ran an advertorial with the title *Curso Papiamentu na Noord*: Papiamentu classes are organized for speakers of Papiamentu. According to the newspaper article, this would be the first time that Papiamentu would be taught, just like other languages. Extra emphasis is put on the fact that this is the language of Aruba: “the interest for our own language is growing.”⁸⁵ and the fact that the language has been undervalued: “The papiamentu language is an important part of our culture and still it has never received the place it deserves. Never before there has been an opportunity to learn the language like other languages are learned, as for example Dutch.”⁸⁶ 24 years later, the lack of opportunities to learn Papiamentu is still recognized in an advertorial for a Papiamentu course that appeared in the *Awe Mainta* in August 2012⁸⁷: “A large part of our population has never had the chance to study and develop their own language.”⁸⁸ The value of the language for migrants is also underscored: “All people that come to live in Aruba have to learn Papiamentu in order to be able to integrate in

⁸⁵ "e interes pa nos propio idioma ta creciendo."

⁸⁶ "E idioma papiamentu ta forma un parti importante di nos cultura y toch nunca no a dune lugar cu e merece. Nunco no a haya e oportunidad pa siña e idioma manera a siña otro idioma, manera por ehempel hulandes"

⁸⁷ *Cas di PAPIAMENTU pa adkision y desaroyo di idioma Papiamentu!* *Awe Mainta* 2012 08 01 p. 14

⁸⁸ Un parti hopi grandi di nos pueblo nunca a haya e oportunidad pa studia y desaroya nan mes lenga.

our community and to be able to function properly in our culture. Learning the language they will learn to know the culture of our country.”⁸⁹

The start of the pilot project of the introduction of Papiamentu as language of instruction in two schools was heralded by the *Awe Mainta* newspaper of August 17, 2012 as a “historic moment” and education in Papiamentu was described as “contrary to learning by heart without understanding”^{90 91} The same edition of this newspaper contained a reflection in which the community of the teacher training college IPA reported to be pleased with the news of the introduction of the PSML, and stressed the crucial role of IPA in the development of the PSML. The article also mentions that the IPA team, in close collaboration with the department of education, will take upon itself the development of teaching materials, teacher training as well as research into and monitoring of the effects of the project⁹². The *Amigoe* of August 17, 2012, emphasizes that “it is for the first time in [Aruban] history that Papiamentu is the first language of instruction in primary education”^{93 94}. This is the publication that led to the social media discussion that is dealt with in chapter 5.3. The only other mention of the relation between language and education

⁸⁹ Tur persona co ta bin establece nan mes na Aruba tin cu siña Papiamentu pa por integra nan mes den nos comunidad y pa por funciona optimalmente den nos pais. Siñando e idioma nan ta siña conoce e cultura di nos pais.

⁹⁰ Contrario na siña fo'i cabes sin componde

⁹¹ *Proyecto Scol Multilingual: Na caminda pa Enseñansa cu sentido*. *Awe Mainta* 2012 08 17 p. 21

⁹² *IPA orguyoso co entrada di Scol Multilingual den scol basico*. *Awe Mainta* 2012 08 17 p. 13

⁹³ Het is voor het eerst in de geschiedenis dat de primaire instructietaal op de basisschool Papiaments is."

⁹⁴ *Papiaments als instructietaal op San Hose en Conrado Coronel*. *Amigoe* 2012 08 17 p.3

was in the *Amigoe* of August 21, 2012. This newspaper contained a column by filmmaker and writer Rene van Nie that praised the new policy of the main secondary school, *Colegio Arubano*, that would make a stricter selection at the gate so the student numbers could go down with about 40% in the hope to increase the study success. One of the key issues that was addressed in this column is the perceived poor Dutch proficiency of a section of the school teachers that would have to be remedied.

The annual celebration of world mother tongue day receives attention in several newspapers. The *Awe Mainta* of February 21, 2013⁹⁵ reports that "language is the most powerful instrument to conserve and develop our material and immaterial heritage."⁹⁶ This call for the recognition of the value of Papiamentu is also reflected in an article in the *Bon Dia* of February 21, 2014⁹⁷ on the international mother tongue day. "The most important aspect of this day is to remind us and the whole world that our mother tongue is not only important but that they also are a fundamental representation of what makes us human."⁹⁸ Further down in this contribution, the author speaks of

⁹⁵ *Dia di lenga materno* *Awe Mainta* 2013 02 21 p. 23

⁹⁶ Idioma ta e instrumento mas poderoso pa conserva y desaroya nos patrimonio tangibel y intangibel.

⁹⁷ *Biblioteca nacional cu charla riba dia internacional di lenga materno*. *Bon Dia* 2014 02 21 p.9

⁹⁸ "E elemento mas importante di e dia aki ta pa corda nos y mundo henter cu nos idioma materno no solamente ta importante pero nan ta representa nos riba nivelnan profundo como ser humano."

“the obstacles that had to be overcome and the ongoing battle to have Papiamentu recognized as a language, especially by its speakers [...]”⁹⁹

The premature announcement of the broader introduction of the Skol Multilingual in 2017 also led to some fierce discussions in the written media. Following the celebration of world mother tongue day on February 21, on March 6¹⁰⁰ a furious reader's letter appeared in the *Amigoe* under the title “Yet again, education in the mother tongue?”¹⁰¹ that is representative of the resistance against mother tongue education - and is deemed worthy of publication:

OH YES! It had to happen! The Unesco-oracle has spoken and so... we will and shall educate in the mother tongue, even if the whole community thinks that is ludicrous. At least, a belligerent young school-mistress lectured us on that topic, with a lifted finger, on TeleAruba on the 21st of February. What she missed is a blackboard to pen down her theses. But we will have to accept, as it has been 'proven' by a recluse Unesco scholar.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ "e obstaculonan cu mester a vence y e lucha cu a hiba continuamente pa Papiamentu por a haya reconocimiento como lenga, particularment di su propio papiadonan [...]"

¹⁰⁰ De Beijer, Henk (2017) Toch onderwijs in de moedertaal? In *Amigoe*, 6 maart 2017

¹⁰¹ Toch onderwijs in de moedertaal?

¹⁰² JA HOOR" Het kon niet uitblijven! Het Unesco-orakel heeft gesproken en dus... we zullen en moeten het onderwijs in de moedertaal doen, al vindt de hele goegemeente dat het een ramp is. Althans, een wijsneuzige jonge juf kwam dat met opgeheven vingertje op 21 februari op TeleAruba aan ons doceren. Het ontbrak haar aan een schoolbord om haar stellingen op te kalken. Maar we hebben ze maar te aanvaarden, want een Unesco-kamergeleerde heeft het 'bewezen'.

The author of this contribution considers Papiamentu to be an interesting language, but that, however, due to its limited geographic spread, it is at risk of disappearing and, the fact that there are two orthographies of the language would lead “many outsiders to wonder what kind of lunatics live on the ABC-islands.”¹⁰³ The author illustrates his opinion with examples of resistance to mother tongue education from Africa, and with reference to the fact that one of the Aruban ministers speaks impeccable Dutch, proof of the fact that Arubans can learn Dutch perfectly. The letter concludes with the following paragraph:

Children have no problem learning multiple languages simultaneously. That is what the recluse scholars of Unesco should herald too. You cannot start too early, but you do have to make sure that there are motivated teachers! And that is what is lacking, especially with regards to Dutch. They themselves speak pitiful Dutch - barring the good ones - and their Dutch colleagues do the best they can to also babble Papiamentu.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ "dat menig buitenstaander zich afvraagt wat voor gekken er op die ABC-eilanden wonen."

¹⁰⁴ Kinderen hebben geen moeite met het aanleren van meerdere talen tegelijk. Dat zouden de kamergeleerden van de Unesco ook eens moeten verkondigen. Je kunt niet jong genoeg beginnen, maar je moet wel zorgen voor gemotiveerde leerkrachten! En daar ontbreekt het op Aruba aan, zeker wat betreft het Nederlands. Ze spreken het zelf erbarmelijk - de goeden niet te na gesproken - en hun Nederlandse collega's doen hun best om ook Papiaments te brabbelen."

Two days later the same newspaper published a reaction to the reader's letter of March 6¹⁰⁵, written by a teacher that teaches Dutch in one of the public secondary schools on the island. He points out that the letter of March 6 focuses on the happy few that have been successful, and not on the "many others that did and do not succeed."¹⁰⁶ According to the author, "The question is no longer whether one has to choose for Papiamento or for Dutch. The issue pertains to the question as to how both languages could play a meaningful role in the classroom."¹⁰⁷ The goal would still be proficiency in Dutch, but the key to success in all skills like reading, writing and calculus is the mother tongue. The response that followed on March 13¹⁰⁸ consisted primarily of a repetition of the argumentation provided in the first letter, but the author added that in Europe it is normal for many to receive education in a foreign language, and that "The French government has always done the best they can to eradicate regional languages. And at least for Flemish they have been totally successful."¹⁰⁹ He concludes that "Dutch is simply the language of the government, judiciary and the Kingdom"¹¹⁰, which implies that education

¹⁰⁵ Bant, Willem (2017) Nederlands of Papiaments. *Amigoe* March 8, 2017

¹⁰⁶ "vele anderen [die] niet slaagden en slagen."

¹⁰⁷ "De vraag is al lang niet meer of er in het Arubaans onderwijs gekozen moet worden voor Papiaments of Nederlands. De vraag is wel hoe we beide talen op een zinvolle manier een plaats kunnen geven in de klas."

¹⁰⁸ De Beijer, Henk (2017) Willem, word wakker! *Amigoe*, March 13 2017

¹⁰⁹ "De Franse overheid heeft altijd haar uiterste best gedaan de regionale talen uit te roeien. Dat is ze met het Vlaams in ieder geval volkomen gelukt."

¹¹⁰ "En het Nederlands is nu eenmaal de taal van de overheid, van de jurisprudentie en van het Koninkrijk."

should be in Dutch, and proficiency in Dutch is high priority, in order to be equal citizens.

On December 11 of 2017, the minister of education, Rudy Lampe formally announced educational reform, including the introduction of Papiamentu as language of instruction in primary education¹¹¹. This announcement led to commotion, especially as the announcement came as a surprise to many, including parliament. The Awe Mainta of December 14, 2017 reports that parliamentarian Daphne Lejuez questions the decision of the minister of Education, Rudy Lampe, to introduce the multilingual school. The minister announced that the introduction would start on January 1, three weeks after the announcement, and no explanation had been given to parliament. This led to “much surprise and preoccupation”¹¹² Further concern was raised as “it is lamentable that the results of research [into the effectiveness of PSML] had not been made public, and apparently the research was done by the same professionals that support the Scol Multilingual and not by an independent and objective institute...”¹¹³ Furthermore the parliamentarian questions the lack of student mentoring, teacher training, adequate materials and more, which should be prioritized rather than language. In the end she calls for independent and objective research, as “I have nothing against our language

¹¹¹ *Lampe: na januari ta implementa plan multilingual pa tur scol na Aruba*. Noticia Cla 2017 12 11 (<https://www.noticiacla.com/news/11615>)

¹¹² "hopi sorpresa y preocupacion"

¹¹³ Ta lamenta cu no a haci e resultado di e onderzoek aki publico, mirando cu aparentemente e lo a wordo haci pa e mesun profesionalnan cu ta esnan cu ta sostene e Scol Multilingual y no pa un instituto independiente y obhetivo...

Papiamento, but would this really be the only way to improve our education in Aruba? In Curaçao it hasn't gone as well as they promised..."^{114 115}

Even influential columnist Rona Coster, a blogger for the VisitAruba website, paid attention to this topic.¹¹⁶ She openly questions "what kind of opportunities does Papiamento open for our kids?" However, she claims to have to be careful what she says, as she is "not going to answer for fear of being beaten with a flag pole by readers with strong nationalistic feelings." Proposing English language of instruction education as an alternative she questions whether Papiamento is "ready for the starring role assigned to it by the MinEdu. Wouldn't it be useful to further develop the language, first? How about an academy, just like the Academie Francaise, the French Academy, a special council in charge of growing and enriching the French language since 1635, we could have one right here." She concludes that "we should give the language a hand before it is made to star in the educational system. Bo sa."

A final contribution on this topic is a column by Aruban columnist Arien Rasmijn. In his weekly contribution to the *Amigoe* on December 19, 2017, as well as on his blog *DenCayente* he discusses the introduction of the PSML under the title *In je moerstaal*, a colloquial reference in Dutch to the mother

¹¹⁴ Nada contra nos idioma Papiamento, pero enberdad esaki lo ta e unico forma pa por mehora e resultado di enseñansa na Aruba? Na Corsou esaki no a bay manera premira ...

¹¹⁵ *Parlamentario Daphne Lejuez (MEP): Ta cuestiona e desicion di minister Lampe pa implementa sistema multilingual na scolnan local.* Awe Mainta, 2017 12 14.

<https://www.awemainta.com/?p=41726>

¹¹⁶ Coster, Rona (2017 12 18) Papiamento takes on Aruba. *VisitAruba*.

<https://batibleki.visitaruba.com>

tongue.¹¹⁷ He carefully states that this is an ambitious act by the new minister of education with “drastic and important consequences”¹¹⁸. He calls it “a revolutionary, brave, much needed and damned risky decision”¹¹⁹ and compares it to “political suicide”¹²⁰ as “in order to make this successful as much money will have to be invested in education as in infrastructure.”¹²¹ Arien Rasmijn sums up the negative responses that he observed in the days since the announcement of the reform, and lists what people say: that we are used to Dutch as language of instruction, that the research data are not public, that Papiamentu is a small language etcetera. However, he argues that: “fact is that our own beautiful, but geographically and anthropologically miniscule language is our first language”¹²²; that “Fact is indeed that there are quite some Arubans that have studied in the Netherlands and still study in the Netherlands and have done so successfully”¹²³, and that “Fact is that so many Arubans don't make it over there, also because of language deficits.”¹²⁴ He finally concludes that “the fact that Arubans have been successful in education

¹¹⁷ Rasmijn, A. (2017 12 24) *Column Den Cayente: In je Moerstaal*. (<https://knipselkrant-curacao.com/column-den-cayente-in-je-moerstaal/>)

¹¹⁸ de gevolgen [zijn] ingrijpend en belangrijk

¹¹⁹ revolutionair, moedig, hard nodig, maar ook een verdomd riskant besluit

¹²⁰ politieke zelfmoord

¹²¹ om dit te laten slagen zal minstens zoveel geld in onderwijs worden gepompt als in infrastructuur

¹²² het is een feit dat onze eigen mooie, maar geografisch en antropologisch piepkleine taal onze eerste is.

¹²³ Feit is inderdaad dat er genoeg Arubanen zijn die in Nederland hebben gestudeerd en nog studeren en dit met succes hebben gedaan.

¹²⁴ Feit is ook dat een heleboel Arubanen het daar niet halen, mede vanwege een taalachterstand.

in the Netherlands is not because of but despite the fact that Dutch was the language of instruction.”¹²⁵ In short, the columnist supports the shift to Papiamentu as language of instruction in primary education, and challenges the continuation of Dutch language of instruction primary education that focuses primarily on the Dutch education system: “why stick to their system?”¹²⁶.

This column was shared online in the online platform *Knipselkrant-Curaçao* and there were nine responses, all of which clearly demonstrate the negative and pejorative opinions about the potential of Papiamentu as a language of instruction. The first reaction comes from someone who self-identifies as a former dean of the law faculty of the University of Aruba and who questions the attitude and potential of Arubans as well as the intentions and sound judgement of the minister. The reaction states that “In general Arubans hate and hated writing in whichever language. [...] Writing a thesis in Papiamentu didn't work, nor in English or in Dutch.”¹²⁷ The proposal by the minister would “appeal to assumed emotional sentiments of subordination that are unaffordable, and he knows that. The proposal will not pass, too expensive. It would be better, and less in vain, if minister Lampe would fight poverty and

¹²⁵ Dat Arubanen alsnog hun bul gehaald hebben in Nederland is niet omdat, maar ondanks dat Nederlands de voertaal was.

¹²⁶ Waarom vasthouden aan hun systeem.

¹²⁷ Over het algemeen hadden en hebben Arubanen een hekel aan schrijven in welke taal dan ook. [...] Een scriptie schrijven in het Papiamentu lukte niet, evenmin in het Engels of Nederlands.

prevent drop outs.”¹²⁸ This rejection is confirmed by the following responses that sarcastically claim that “in Aruba too Papiamento is sanctified”¹²⁹, questioning “what were they thinking?”¹³⁰. The introduction of Papiamento in education would be an attempt “for mafia politicians to attract brainless voters.”¹³¹ A following contributor proposes that “Papiamento should go extinct, just like Dutch” and suggests that Spanish and English take over.¹³² A next contributor refers to “content self-gratifying linguists while the youth is back at square one, as language education is still of the poorest quality.”¹³³ The next contribution states that “Whole tribes speak neither Dutch nor English, and are poorly proficient in Papiamento. And that on an island where foreign tourism is the main source of income and that pretends to be 'international'.”¹³⁴ Not only the island, the linguists, the language itself and the population are blamed, the columnist also gets a slap on the wrist as “he should be grateful to his wise mother that handed him the right tools” as “if this journalist had been schooled in Papiamento, he would most probably not

¹²⁸ Zijn huidige voorstel speelt in op vermeende emotionele gevoelens van achterstelling die onbetaalbaar zijn en dat weet hij ook. Het voorstel zal het niet halen, veel te duur. Minister Lampe kan zich beter en minder vruchteloos storten op de armoedebestrijding en het voorkomen dat kinderen hun opleiding niet afmaken.

¹²⁹ Dus ook op Aruba wordt het papiaments heilig verklaard...

¹³⁰ inderdaad: hoe dom kan je zijn...

¹³¹ ik weet het, namelijk stemvee creëren voor de maffia politici.

¹³² tijd om over te schakelen naar het spaans en engels. Laat papiamento uitsterven.

¹³³ Maar de taalzelfbevredigers zijn weer blij, en de opgroeiende jeugd weer terug bij af, want de rest van het taalonderwijs is nog steeds erbarmelijk slecht

¹³⁴ Hele volksstammen kunnen noch nederlands, noch engels en spreken zelfs gebrekkig papiaments. En dat op een eiland wat als hoofdbron van inkomen buitenlands toerisme heeft en zich als “internationaal” verkoopt.”

have had a job.”¹³⁵ And finally the last limits his intervention to the brief statement: “How stupid can you be? Here we apply: stupid, more stupid and most stupid.” In this discussion, all contributors apparently felt at ease when attacking the Papiamento language, its speakers, the scholars that study the language and its potential for education. This is representative of the normality of this discourse of inequality.

Throughout these different contributions, it becomes clear that attention is devoted to the benefits of teaching in the mother tongue. Even before Status Aparte, the discussions about language and education were ongoing. With the publication of the combined reports on educational reform by the *Stuurgroep herstructurering onderwijs* in 1988, the new state of Aruba presented a critical self-reflection on the importance of quality education and the role the mother tongues of the people of Aruba could play in that. In the magazine of the teacher's union, urgent calls for the introduction of Papiamento in education were made. The newspapers heralded the intended introduction of Papiamento in education and the necessity of national consensus was underscored. Throughout the years, it became clear that no such national consensus existed. It had to take until 2012 before Papiamento could be gradually introduced as language of instruction in two pilot schools (originally 4 pilot schools were planned, 2 opted out during the preparatory process). The responses in the written media were mild and factual, but that is mainly due to

¹³⁵ "De kans was erg groot dat indien deze journalist in het papiaments was onderwezen dat hij geen baan had, gezien het droef slecht onderwijs vwb andere talen. Deze journalist moet zijn verstandige moeder dankbaar zijn die hem het juiste gereedschap heeft aangedragen."

the fact that by 2012, Facebook had taken over as medium of popular discussion in Aruba (in the next two sections these discussions are outlined). When in 2017 the decision was taken to introduce Papiamentu as language of instruction in the Aruban school system, the lack of national consensus became very clear in the written media as well as in social media. In reader's letters and columns the choice was questioned and popular beliefs on the inadequateness of Papiamentu as language of learning and education were revived. The online comments on a critical but supportive column by Arien Rasmijn further demonstrate the strength and intensity of these beliefs on language and education, and apparently, also in 2017, it appears to be socially acceptable to publicly pass judgement on a language and its speakers.

5.3 Social media

5.3.1 Social media: unpolished, public and polylogue

The rise of social media during the first decade of the 21st century created a plethora of opportunities to access and study of the voices of audiences, especially as the filtering role of the institutionalized media as present in the examples of chapter 5.2 were removed and a new genre developed that allows for the immediate nature of the production and immediate publication of text in its raw form and in direct interaction with co-texts. These “new data sources are interesting sites for critical language and communication studies, e.g. as one form of social attitudes and discourses” (Khosravinik & Unger, 2016, p. 211). The bottom-up voices of the Aruban citizens that take a position in the debate on language and education can be heard in the social media debates surrounding the introduction of Papiamentu as language of instruction in primary education. As can be observed in the representation of these polylogues on the following pages, a multitude of perspectives and positions can be taken up, representative of the complexity of the appreciation of the role of languages in education, but as will become clear, in governance and judiciary as well.

27 Facebook discussions have been analyzed for this study, representing 331 participants that participated in facebook discussions. These discussions had been searched on the basis of facebook searches for the following keywords: “Scol Multilingual”, “PSML”, “Papiamentu”, “onderwijs”, “education” and “educacion”. The outcomes of these searches were filtered on the basis of

relevance for Aruba and on the presence of at least 10 comments with content. The contributors to all 27 Facebook discussions that resulted from this process were anonymized and the names of contributors were replaced by codes, ranging from COMM1 to COMM 331. All contributors were cross referenced in an identification file in which contributors were registered, ensuring that single contributors would not be counted double or triple. With a total word count of 75.000 these Facebook discussions represent the voices of a multitude of participants (amounting to 0,3% of the population of Aruba) that would normally not be heard in the media discussions and that allow us to understand these voices in context and at the time of the origin of that discussion.

The analysis of the Facebook discussions followed a layered approach. After anonymization of the contributors, a close reading was done in which key characteristics of the discussion and the positioning of contributors (pro or contra, sceptic or unclear) was assessed. For each discussion a written report was composed that contained the information on the nature of the post, the characteristics of the discussion (number of responses, number of *likes* or other emoticons, number of words), and the main thread or special characteristics of the discussion. After this introductory technical report, an analysis follows that focuses on the *topoi* of the discourse on language that have emerged from the study of the literature on language and education (chapter 3 of this book), the analysis of policy (chapter 4 of this book). During the process of analysis, these *topoi* have been adjusted and fine-tuned to grasp and describe the structural nature of the belief systems on language and society that transpire from the data. The selected text was either in

Papiamento, English, Dutch or Spanish. For readability of this book, these quotes have been translated into English, however all original quotes have been provided for verification and further interpretation in footnotes. Out of these analyses, two have been selected as they introduce the two identified historical stages of the introduction of Papiamento in Aruban education in 2012 and 2017, these can be found in sections 5.3.2 and section 5.3.3 of this chapter. Finally, section 5.3.4 provides an overview of the recurrence of the identified themes throughout Facebook discussions that touch upon the same topic.

Section 5.3.2 will deal with an example of a social media discussion on Facebook about the introduction of the pilot phase of the Multilingual School in 2012. This particular discussion has been selected as it is representative for the wide variety of perspectives on the status, potential and position of the different languages in Aruban education. As that discussion took place on Facebook, and was initiated by a well-known Aruban artist, a great number of individuals participated, which offers the potential for ideologies and beliefs to surface and to be discussed. The chapter continues with an elaboration of echoes of the same topoi in Facebook discussion that took place around the same time and on the same topic.

In section 5.3.3 the focus is on a second major development that was pivotal in the introduction of Papiamento as language of instruction: the announcement of the gradual introduction of the Projecto Scol Multilingual on December 11, 2017 by the Minister of Education. This announcement led to a storm of reactions to this post, but there were also many other critical as well as

supportive posts that are presented in the next section that contains an elaboration of echoes of the same topoi in Facebook discussion that took place around the same time and on the same topic.

5.3.2 The announcement of the pilot Skol Multilingual in 2012

Introduction

ARUBA

Maertalige basisschool van start

Papiaments als instructietaal op San Hose en Conrado Coronel

D — Leerlingen in de eerste klas van de Colegio San Hose en Colegio Conrado en vanaf dit schooljaar officieel les in pa. Tot te voor het eerst in de geschiedenisre instructietaal op de basisschool.

maakt deel project. Het wil de meertalige jongeren basisschool. De eerste klas van de Colegio San Hose en Colegio Conrado en vanaf dit schooljaar officieel les in pa. Tot te voor het eerst in de geschiedenisre instructietaal op de basisschool.

in de laatste twee klassen van de basisschool een vak. Goede basis Volgens Directie Onderwijs en Instituto Pedagogico Arubano (IPA) dient het naasten van de lesstof in het Papiaments in de lagere klassen een een breedte doel. Ten eerste krijgen de kinderen een goede basis in één taal, waardoor ze gemakkelijker een tweede, derde en vierde taal zouden kunnen leren. En ten tweede de leerlingen kunnen zich meer concentreren op de stof. Ze hoeven de stof dan namelijk niet meer eerst voor zichzelf te vertalen. Hierdoor kunnen ze de stof beter opnemen en begrijpen. "De taal die de meestervoud van onze kinderen beheerst, is Papiaments. Daarom beginnen we in het onderwijs nu met Papiaments", legt Directie Onderwijs uit. "Het helpt leren zonder te begrijpen" is niet meer van deze tijd. "De wereld verlost van leerlingen dat ze begrijpen wat ze lezen, dat ze kunnen redeneren en hun mening kunnen geven. Dat ze kunnen toepassen en creatief om kunnen gaan met wat ze geleerd hebben. Alleen zo kan een leerling een goede student en later een goede werker worden", zegt Directie Onderwijs. "En dit alles kan alleen door gebruik te maken van de kindermotivieren. De minister van Nieuw Nederland Spaans in klassen van eerste tanger de wijze. "Op termijn dat met bijvoorbeeld korte filmpje opcollecties." Directie Onderwijs gemiddeld dat ze zelf leren. Wel is meer aandacht ook meer tijd. Het aanbod wordt ook op gestructureerde daan, zegt de wijze, want les vanaf de vijf om in het N van te volgen de tweede klappen leer- en Nederland dan bovendien worden beetje kunnen enigszins kan het Nederland



Onderwijzer Arthur Dexters (AVP) was bij de start van de meertalige basisschool.

chtend vol ongelukken

Nieuwe douaneregels privévliegtuigen en plezierja

ORANJESTAD — Privévliegtuigen en pleziervaartuigen die tijdelijk op Aruba zijn, krijgen per 1 oktober te maken met nieuwe regels. Vanaf die datum moet een privé lucht- of pleziervaartuig bij binnenkomst schriftelijke invoer indienen. Dat maakte de douane gisteren bekend.

hebben. Bij tijdelijke invoer wordt onderscheid gemaakt tussen privé lucht- of pleziervaartuigen die 90 dagen of minder in Aruba verblijven of lucht- of pleziervaartuigen die langer dan 90 dagen in Aruba blijven. Voor de eerste groep; 90 dagen of minder, wordt een assigil tot tijdelijke invoer gegeven zonder borg terug voor de laatste groep geldt dat de assigil wordt invoer betreft. Het is van belang dat de wetgeving is de wetgeving. Ook kunnen de partijvaartuig bediening om verkeer, kon voor Overige nieuw richt voor invoer

On August 18, 2012, the AUTHOR, a well-known Aruban musician, puts a public post on Facebook: a picture of a newspaper article on the announcement of the introduction of Papiamentu as language of instruction in two primary schools, San Hose and Conrado Coronel. The newspaper article was published in the only Dutch language newspaper of Aruba, *Amigo*, under the title: “Papiamentu als instructietaal op San Hose en Conrado Coronel: Meertalige basisschool van start.” This is the announcement of the start of the multilingual pilot project under the name of *Proyecto Scol Multilingual (PSML)*, as discussed in chapter 5.2. The author of the post vehemently opposes the introduction of Papiamentu as language of instruction and foresees “the disaster for San Hose and Conrado.” He challenges the foundation of the choices made as “the arguments I read in this article is a JOKE because WHO says that Papiament is the present language spoken in the majority of homes Island wide.? Am I missin' out somethin' here? I may not be able to change this but as long as ALL exams don't come in PAPIAMENTO, this is totally absurd.!!” Later on the author comments that “We are all humans and we DO make mistakes. this, my friends, is a ginormous one.!!”

The newspaper article that was used for this post announced the start of the Scol Multilingual pilot project. This project was initiated to address a core issue that the Aruban education system faces: the fact that most primary and secondary education in Aruba is provided in the language of the former colonizer: Dutch, which is a foreign language for 94 percent of the population. The approach of the Scol Multilingual is a response to the fact that the Aruban

society is *de facto* multilingual: Papiamentu, Dutch, English and Spanish are most used in Aruba. Papiamentu is used as the primary language of instruction and all four languages are offered as a subject, starting with Papiamentu and gradually introducing Dutch, English and Spanish as subject languages in the curriculum and using them as medium of instruction. The project would first be piloted in two schools, where student progress in language skills as well as cognitive academic skills would be monitored closely by the directorate of education.

This frontal attack on the introduction of the Scol Multilingual could not but elicit responses from opponents and supporters. The post elicited 7 shares and 173 comments, all posted in the year 2012. In total the post and its responses add up to 15221 words, a total of 39 pages of discussion on the potential, role and function of, mainly, Dutch and Papiamentu in education and beyond. The Facebook post is classified in the data-set as FB 1 2012 08 18.

The author of the post was very engaged in the discussion, providing 35 comments in reaction to contributions by others, the main other contributor to the discussion was COMM 8 who wrote 24 comments. 55 Facebook users contributed to this rich discussion on the use of Papiamentu and other languages in the Aruban education system. 35 participants in the discussion opposed the introduction of the pilot project, 14 supported or accepted the pilot and for 7 contributors the posts were too vague or off topic to discern what their position was. As far as can be verified, almost all participants in the discussion were Arubans, two of the respondents living in the US but of Antillean descent. The discussion was mainly conducted in English (the

language initially used by the author of the post) and Papiamentu, but occasionally Dutch was used, too. The tone of the discussion was informal, sometimes even emotional as can be seen in the use of capitalization, use of (multiple) exclamation marks and expressions of despair. Before the discussion was retrieved from Facebook, at least one contribution was later deleted by its author or by another party, which can be deduced from the fact that some contributors refer to a nationalist comment that cannot be traced in the discussion.

The data presented on the following pages demonstrate the presence of the following arguments in the Facebook exchange. Argumentation in the comments that reject the pilot project can be subdivided in six categories:

1. It used to be better in the past... I went to school in Dutch, I was successful, so the system is successful;
2. If you teach children in Papiamentu, they will not be able to succeed in higher education;
3. Papiamentu is an incomplete language that is not fit for academic use, is not international;
4. Dutch is the language of the law and of administration, so we can not change the language of instruction;
5. Introduction of Papiamentu in education is a nationalist/ideological/... project - at the expense of the children's future;

6. The problem of the education system is not the language of instruction.

Argumentation in support of the project mainly centered on the following arguments:

1. If you are taught in your mother tongue, you are much more likely to be successful, including learning other languages;
2. This project follows a research-based model;
3. The current system is failing the children, so we should welcome change;
4. Neither Dutch nor Papiamentu are world languages, Dutch will not open the world to you.

The discussion

That discussions on language choice can arouse strong feelings is illustrated by the fact that one contributor to the discussion on the introduction of Papiamentu in education made the point that if the introduction would be prohibited, that would equal "Cultural genocide" (r. 2316). COMM 49

Papiamentu is a native language. It is endemic to the ABC islands. A language that the natives of the islands speak and therefore it has every right to exist and develop. It should be the basis for learning a second - and foreign language. One requirement for its right to existence is that it becomes mandatory in school. If it is allowed to die or is killed off, intentionally or unintentionally, we will be committing CULTURAL GENOCIDE. As far as I can tell, this projects sounds ok to me.

Another contributor stated that the Aruban population has become so used to the Dutch language of instruction education system and that that system does not benefit the Aruban youth, that one can speak of a “Stockholm effect” and that the - for the author unwanted - situation has become “normal”: “I think there are quite some different opinions about what happens in schools. As far as I'm concerned, school should be the place to develop our children and bring them to a higher level of thinking so they develop their potential and can understand, solve, manage, proactive, creative etc etc (not a language institute). If a child knows 4 or 10 languages, it will still not have learned about the world. If your child asks you how a 'volcan' functions, I do not think you will explain that in Mandarin, because our goal is to UNDERSTAND. Who are the children that most benefit from the current system? Let's look in the mirror. There is such a thing as the 'stokholm effect' (sic.), if we have been in a situation for a long time, we consider it to be 'normal'”¹³⁶

There appears to be consensus among the contributors that the current education system is failing. COMM 30, an Aruban academic, mentions “dismal

¹³⁶ I.2382: COMM 38 'Mi ta kere cu tin basta diferencia di opinion di loke tin cu pasa na scol. Scol segun mi ta e luga cu tin cu desaroya ns muchanan y hiba nan na un nivel mas halto di pensamiento pa por yega nan potencial y por compronde, soluciona, dirigi, proactivo, creativo, etc etc (no un instituto di lenga). Si un mucha sa 4 of 10 idioma, ainda e no a siña di mundo. Si bo yiu puntra bo con un 'volcan' ta traha, mi no ta kere ns ta bay splic'e na Mandarin, paso nos meta ta pa e COMPRONDE.

Ken ta e muchanan cu tin mas beneficio di e sistema actual? Ban wak den spiel.

Tin un cos cu yama 'stokholm effect', cu ora nos ta den un situacion pa tanto tempo, nos ta tum'e como 'normal'

Havo/VWO results, high dropout rates and academic challenges of our students in the Netherlands)" COMM 40 confirms this vision:

it is the education system which is sick to the bone and the teachers which can't teach (with the exception of a little few). The system is emotionally dead. Has no heart. No soul. It's a copy paste. As my boy COMM 30 "does" say :) I teach in 4 languages in one class because I have not only 4 mother tongues in front of me, but also several in me. The real thing is to touch the heart and soul of each child. We need to speak heart in the classroom.

COMM 51 finally concludes that the introduction of the Scol Multilingual as a way to get rid of the traditional, failing educational system: They/we are not simply introducing Papiamentu as instructional language, but we are getting rid of an educational school system that is not efficient, non productive and structurally undermines the potential of our youth. Therefore they are installing the Scol Multilingual!!'

1. It used to be better in the past... I went to school in Dutch, I was successful, so the system is successful

A first defense for the existing system and the rejection of change that is often heard follows the lines of 'It used to be better in the past... I went to school in Dutch, I was successful, so the system is successful'. Often this claim is further

supported by the claim that nowadays the kids are just lazy or the teachers and schools are not doing their jobs. If the children, teachers, and schools would only make an effort, the perceived problems would disappear. COMM 8 "sigur!!! Because these children they dont have any trouble with the dutch they just lazy..." and COMM 11 "I am of the opinion that our children don't make enough effort."¹³⁷ Not only are the children of today lazy, but they are also more privileged as they have so many more tools at their disposition. COMM 20: "Former generations of kids learned so why not the kids of today. They have al the attributes that other did not have."

One of the ailments of the current system would be that children do not learn proper Dutch in schools anymore. COMM 21 "Right now Dutch oral proficiency of children that have completed HAVO VWO when they arrive in the Netherlands is shameful, let's not even talk about writing. I am happy that in my time, I was educated in decent Dutch."¹³⁸ Decent Dutch was taught by the "frères", the Frères de la Salle, and decent Dutch was the key to success: COMM 9: "Dutch should become like in the days of the frere. in the times when I started to go to school, one was not allowed to talk Papiamento, not even in the schoolyard. That is why we had so many dr.drs.ing.ir.mr that now want to send our youth centuries back in time."¹³⁹ Those that succeeded in

¹³⁷ COMM 11 'Ami ta di e opinion cu nos muchanan no ta aplicando nan mes debidamente.'

¹³⁸ COMM 21 'Awor mes ta un berguensa con e muchanan cu ta caba HAVO VWO ta papia (pa nos no papia di scirbi) Hulandes ora nan ta yega Hulanda. Ami si ta contento cu den mi tempo, mi a wordo educa na bon Hulandes.'

¹³⁹ COMM 9 'hulandes mester bira manera antes tempo di frere. tempo ma cuminsa bai school, bo no mag di papia papiamento, ni den cura di school. ta pesei nos a haya tanto dr.drs.ing.ir.mr. cu awe kier manda nos jui den siglonan bek atras.'

their careers, the ones with titles on the basis of education, and have political power would now change the educational system and, in doing so, take away those opportunities from Aruba's youth.

COMM 32 disagrees with this point of view and points out that previous generations were not as successful as the others point out. He goes even further, implicitly stating that proficiency in Dutch was the decisive factor to determine what schools children would be sent to. "Also, historically in Aruba and Curaçao, if students weren't proficient in Dutch, they were automatically sent to huishoudschool and ambachtschool. Statistically, there was a large amount of students that went to these schools. The myth that previous generations succeeded in Dutch is what it is: a myth." He explicitly identifies the belief that previous generations' proficiency in Dutch as a myth. This view is not shared by the majority of the participants in the conversation COMM 52: "in our times our language at school was Dutch and we got our diploma's just fine...to me a huge surprise as well.....I have nothing against my native language, but it is only spoken here, how will their language skills improve when you stress now on their native language and leave the essentials aside."

A first-hand account comes from a student who shares her experiences when starting her studies in the Netherlands. COMM 44 states to be a student at a university of applied sciences. She recounts her struggle with Dutch when she arrived in the Netherlands. She recognizes that children have to make an extra effort when it comes to Dutch language acquisition as she had a very difficult, "tough" first year. While calling for more attention for Dutch proficiency, she also illustrates that she could not participate in discussions and even "when u

hear makaba¹⁴⁰ speak dutch, u askin uself if u really get Dutch in school.” She overcame the language barrier, as she now reports to actively participate in discussions. Her experience makes her call for more support for Dutch: “Practice D Dutch and don't leave it Intimidate u!! Stop creatin excuses 4 D kids. Believe in them.. they could well learn it, once they put their minds to it.”

The underlying beliefs that education was more successful and that older generations learned better - and better Dutch - is persistent despite the fact that there is no proof of this statement. On the contrary, statistics demonstrate that the number of highly educated Arubans is growing steadily and that the number of people that have not studied beyond primary education is steadily declining (Ad.3.06-Educational-attainment-by-age-group-and-gender-census-2000).¹⁴¹

2. If you teach children in Papiamentu, they will not be able to succeed (in higher education)

A strong belief is that if you would change the language of instruction, students would not be able to learn Dutch. The fact that Dutch has been the language of instruction for so long has also led to the belief that you can only learn Dutch well if you teach in that language, not if you only teach it as a

¹⁴⁰ Makamba is a nickname for European Dutch, misspelled here as 'makaba'

¹⁴¹ One should be cautious when interpreting these data, as the Aruban bureau of statistics includes the so called Educacion Profesional Intermedio as tertiary education, as such creating the false impression that a very high number of Arubans have achieved bachelor-level studies.

subject (like English or Spanish). Consequently, students will not be successful in higher education, as their Dutch would be insufficiently developed due to not having been taught in that language. It is interesting to note that for most participants in the conversation this does not apply to English, as apparently English can be learned without being taught in that language. COMM 16 adds to the confusion: “It is true that we must embrace papiamentu, but if we keep on thinking that papiamentu is the most important one, we will not know any other language!”¹⁴²

The first part of this line of reasoning is illustrated in the comment by COMM 2, who claims that “currently, the children do not speak read write correct Dutch, can you imagine when it would not be the language of instruction anymore?”¹⁴³ The second part is illustrated by COMM 11, who claims that adjustment to the Dutch educational system will be even more difficult for students if they have not been taught in that language:

Already our kids have considerable problems trying to dominate the Dutch language, since its is not our native or spoken language. My question is, what do these schools hope to achieve by doing this? If and when these kids of ours decide to pursue their studies in Holland, its

¹⁴² 'Berdad mester brasa nos papiamentu pero si keda pensa asina cu papiamentu ta esun mas importante, nos lo no conose niun otro idioma!'

¹⁴³ 'ja kaba e muchanan no ta papia lesa skirbi hulandes drechi, korda ora e no ta instruktietaal mas'

going to be even more difficult for them to adjust to the system over there

COMM 9, an active contributor to the discussion, considers teaching in Papiamentu and teaching Papiamentu a loss of time as the language supposedly has no function in society. “I do not send my child to school to loose time on learning Papiamentu, because when it goes to the supermarket, he will have to speak spanish, if he goes to the movies, he will have to speak Spanish, wherever you go, it is spanish, so what is the goal???”¹⁴⁴ As for higher education, the question is raised whether Papiamentu is the language of instruction at any university in the Netherlands, implicitly referring to the fact that the choice for Papiamentu as language of instruction would be an error. COMM 2 questions “Where do the majority of our students go to study every year? To the Netherlands? And do the Dutch Universities teach in papiamentu? I don't think so.”¹⁴⁵

This is confirmed by COMM 33 who admits that it is obvious that Papiamentu should be taught, but roots the importance of teaching in Dutch in the need for Dutch for future studies: “It is clear that we need to teach Papiamentu as a subject, but in my opinion, it is important to keep teaching in dutch, as that

¹⁴⁴ 'ami no lo manda mi jui school pe perde tempo pe sinja papiamentu, pasobra si e bai supermercado, ta spanjo e mester papia, si e bai cine, spanjo mester papia, unda bo bai ta spanjo, anto kiko ta e doel???'

¹⁴⁵ 'Ta unda mayoria di nos studiantenan a bai studia e anja aki atrobe? Un ta na Hulanda? Y na Hulanda nan ta duna les den papiamentu na Universiteit? I don't think so.'

way the children that want to study in the future stand a chance”¹⁴⁶ It is interesting to note that this contribution ignores the directly preceding contributions by three academics who support the use of Papiamentu in education on the basis of the extent to which children would be better equipped to succeed in higher education. COMM 11 “Until the day we are able to have our own University, then Dutch it shall be! Its as simple as that!”

Finally, according to some the inevitability of Dutch as language of instruction is dictated by the fact that the current Aruban education system uses Dutch exams, especially for HAVO and VWO finals. COMM 8: “I am against because at the end of the day the exam is in Dutch”¹⁴⁷

3. Papiamentu is an incomplete language that is not fit for academic use, is not international.

Linked to the defense of education in Dutch is an interesting argument that is also used in this discussion. This argument is premised on the implicit or explicit view that Papiamentu is an imperfect, incomplete or inadequate language that has no formal status. The author of the post goes as far as to put the word *language* between parentheses, in order to emphasize the fact that he does not consider Papiamentu to be a real language: “Great that we will teach Papiamentu for real (a "language" that WE seniors OURSELVES, have not

¹⁴⁶ 'Claro cu mester tin un vak apart pa Papiamentu, pero den mi wowo ta importante pa keda sinja den hulandes, pa asina e muchanan ku kier bai studia den futuro siquiera tin un chens'

¹⁴⁷ 'Ami ta contra paso na final e examen ta na hulandes'

perfected yet.!! Tsss....."¹⁴⁸ and COMM 9 concludes that "papiamento still is not a language yet"¹⁴⁹.

COMM 37 challenges the adequateness of Papiamento as language of education on the basis of the fact that it is not a world language, referring to the language as a "noble cultural identifier": "While papiamento is a noble cultural identifier....IT IS NOT A WORLD LANGUAGE... without a foundation in Dutch English French or Spanish simply put FORGET IT....SORRY". In doing so, this contributor follows the classic pattern of praise followed by rejection, by means of the concessive "however". COMM 39 further elaborates on the limitations of Papiamento as opposed to Dutch as a world language:

Dutch should remain in schools and Papiamento must be a "vak" not the 'instructietaal'. As AUTHOR said "HOW FAR CAN ANYONE IN THIS WORLD GO WITH PAPIAMENTO", with all due respect to those who are 'PATRIOTIC' about Papiamento. However we should not let 'PATRIOTISM' come between the future education of our ARUBAN children!!

COMM 16 confirms that Papiamento is not a world language but expects that there will be contributors that will point out the Dutch is not a world language either. Therefor he states "unfortunate Papiamento....we can not do much with it on an international level. Not even if we go to study somewhere else in

¹⁴⁸ 'Great pa nos sinja Papiamento berdad (un "idioma" cua NOS MES cu ta grandi scapa, no a perfeciona ainda.!! Tsss.....'

¹⁴⁹ 'bon papiamento ainda no ta un idioma si'

the world will it NOT help us.”¹⁵⁰ Note the frequent use of capitalization and double punctuation as an indicator of the agitated nature of this discussion.

COMM 47 takes the reasoning even further and makes the point that teaching in Papiamentu would lead to an intellectual and cultural isolation of the nation as communication with the rest of the world becomes impossible. It is interesting to note that he starts his contribution with “Mi ta stima Aruba” - “I love Aruba”, expressing patriotic support, followed by “Let's be real”, emphasizing the unrealistic nature of the announced introduction of Papiamentu as language of instruction:

Mi ta stima Aruba. Let's be real. Once outside its borders. How w will our country communicate with the rest of the world? Technology, Science, Education, Politics, history, Entertainment. all will be uninteliigble for our nationals iin less then 20-25 years.

Other contributors make the point that Papiamentu is not only an inadequate or incomplete language, but also that people do not sufficiently care about their language. Implicitly, this apparently also leads to the conclusion that is you do not sufficiently care about the language, the society is not ready yet to use the language in education. COMM 8 confirms this, stating that “it doesn't make sense to instruct children in Papiamentu if they do not know it 100%”¹⁵¹.

¹⁵⁰ 'Papiamentu helaas....nos no por hasi masha uso di dje riba un escala internacional. Ni si nos bai studia na otro parti di mundo e NO ta yuda nos.'

¹⁵¹ 'y no ta make sence instrui e mucha nan na papiamento si nan mes no sabie 100%'

Focusing on the lack of care for the language is further developed by COMM 26, one of the rare contributions in Dutch, in which he first questions the number of spelling mistakes and further makes the point that if one is not fully proficient in a language, one cannot be a supporter of that language:

I read that a lot of people get all worked up about the fact that "nos dushi idioma (our dear language)" would be so important, and yet I see many (MANY) spelling mistakes! AND then I haven't even mentioned the use of loan words.

I know that I am not sufficiently proficient in Papiamentu and yet I see mistakes!

Such a pity!

If you claim that you want to defend "nos dushi idioma (our dear language) you should first be FULLY PROFICIENT in it!¹⁵²

COMM 26 challenges the transfer theory by subtly questioning whether Aruban children would have sufficient knowledge of and understanding in Papiamentu in order to have a sufficient basis for learning foreign languages.

¹⁵² 'Ik lees dat veel mensen zich opwinden over het feit dat "nos dushi Idioma" zo belangrijk wordt gevonden en toch zie ik veel (VEEL!) schrijffouten! EN dan heb ik het gebruik van leenwoorden nog niet eens benoemd.

Ik weet dat ik het Papiaments niet voldoende beheers en toch zie ik fouten!
Jammer!

Want als je jezelf er op voor staat dat je "nos dushi Idioma" wilt verdedigen mag je er eerst voor zorgen dat je het VOLLEDIG (!!!) BEHEERST!

He does not complete the argument with the conclusion that that would be the basis for a rejection of Papiamentu as language of instruction, but indicates that “it is getting tricky”, a comment that implies a warning to the supporters of the change who would not have sufficiently thought through what the proposed change entails.

Thing is that there is too much of a (pre-) assumption that children have a (well based) knowledge of and understanding in their native language, before attending school. And of course it is better (and proven!) that they know, understand and can express themselves emotionally in their native language. For it is easier to learn a foreign language if they know the meaning of words in their own language. And this pre-assumption is where it is getting tricky.

COMM 32, a supporter of the change, contributes to this discussion with a short analysis of the nature of these lines of reasoning: “These antiquated views that Dutch is somehow academically better than Papiamentu is what keeps the powers that be from funding projects that put Papiamentu in the forefront”, making the claims that these views about the academic adequateness of Dutch over Papiamentu are not only antiquated, but that these are the views that stop the powers - whoever these powers could be - from funding (and supporting) the change that is announced in the original post.

Finally, COMM 18, writing in Papiamentu, does not only stress the apparent incompleteness of Papiamentu as a language, but also the lack of care that people have for that language:

Reading all the commentaries, it strikes me that some people write in their language Papiamentu, but do not take the time to write it correctly. Many use Dutch words anyway to express themselves, instead of taking the time to write the correct word in Papiamentu? So how then are we supposed to teach our children Aruban Papiamentu? Furthermore, if one has a chance, check the dictionary of our Papiamentu, it contains Dutch words that do not have a synonym (yet?)¹⁵³.

So, according to this contributor, not only is the language apparently still incomplete because it uses loan words, but its users also apparently have insufficient care for the language in order to be able to teach that language.

4. Dutch is the language of the law and of administration (etc.), so we cannot change the language of instruction

Many opponents of the introduction of Papiamentu as language of instruction root their arguments in the inevitability that if Dutch is the language of the Kingdom, of the judiciary, and of governance, it should remain the language of education as well. COMM 20 makes the point that since Dutch is an official

¹⁵³ Mi ta lesa tur e comentarionan aki riba y ta ripara cu algun personanan ta scirbi na nan idioma Papiamentu, pero ni tuma e tempo pa scirb'e correcto.. Hopi ta usa toch palabranan Hulandes pa expresa nan mes, enbes di tuma nan tempo pa scirbi e palabra correcto di Papiamentu ? Con e ora ey, nos mes kier sinja nos muchanan pa expresa nan mes den Papiamentu di Aruba ? Tambe, si un ta hanja chens, check e buki di vocabulario di nos Papiamentu, tin palabranan hulandes den dje cu no tin un otro palabra pe (ainda?)

language in Aruba, and Aruba is still connected to the Netherlands, there is no reason why Dutch should not be language of instruction.

Kids learn any language as long as they have a language that they can refer to. The reference language can be any language. If it is done at a early age it's great. Aruba is still connected to Holland so kids should dominate dutch whether they further their studies in holland or not. One of our official languages is still dutch. That is one reason.

The assumption that children can learn in any language is shared by COMM 5, one of the few who contributed to the conversation in Dutch and calls for attention for the children: "This is about the future of children, think about this very well! ... and that can be done in any language!!!"¹⁵⁴

Despite the fact that both Papiamentu and Dutch are official languages in Aruba, the perception is that Dutch is the only language of governmental communication. COMM 54 even states "as long as all official documents are written in Dutch or in English *nuff said*"¹⁵⁵, leaving it up to the reader of the comment to conclude that as long as that is the case, Papiamentu cannot be the (or a) language of instruction. Changing the language of instruction elicits remarks about the fear that this would lead to a certain form of incongruence in the system: Education, governance and judiciary should speak the same language, and if the language of for instance the judiciary doesn't change, the

¹⁵⁴ 'Het gaat om de toekomst van kinderen, denk daar eens heel goEd over na! ...en dat mag in elke taal!!!'

¹⁵⁵ 'ainda tur documento official ta wordo skirbi of den Hulandes of Ingles nuff said'

language of instruction doesn't change. COMM 52 "I love my papiamento, but in my work environment, Dutch is and must be my primary language. All in our judicial system is Dutch, after all we are a small part of them and this is not about to change." Aruba, us, is represented here as a small part of the Netherlands, them, and that is not likely to change. This implicitly leads to the conclusion that Dutch should remain the language of instruction.

Not only the official status of the language, but also the fact that Aruban citizens have Dutch nationality is an argument for the maintenance of Dutch as the language of instruction: COMM 8 states that "from the moment that you go to school dutch must be enforced!! AFTER ALL WE HAVE A DUTCH I REPEAT DUTCH NATIONALITY!" He goes on to make the claim that since Dutch is the language of higher positions and of financial success, the proposed change is described as ridiculous. "unless they take us to high positions without needing dutch and pay us decent salaries I will not accept this ridicule with my mouth shut! but it's far to be anything like that!"¹⁵⁶

Some contributors have constructed an interesting way out of the mother tongue argument, stating that if Papiamento is the mother tongue, Dutch is the father tongue. These mother/father-relations also determine the domains

¹⁵⁶ 'E rato ey cu bo ta bai scol hulandes mester wordo forza!! AFTER ALL WE HAVE A DUTCH I REPEAT DUTCH NATIONALITY! unless cu nan tuma nos den un position halto sin mester hulandes y paga nos bon cen mi ta acepta e ridicules aki cu mi boca sera! but it's far to be anything like that!'

in which the language can be used, leaving Papiamentu the role of language for colloquial use at home. COMM 16 confirms this:

I love my language Papiamentu...but let's NOT forget that we are born with DUTCH nationality, which makes that our Father language is Dutch and NOT Papiamentu! As our passport is Dutch this means that Dutch becomes compulsory as well. Papiamentu is our mother tongue and it is the language we can speak at home or "whatsoever"¹⁵⁷

COMM 41 is very outspoken in support of Dutch as language of instruction on the basis of the fact that laws and official documentation are in Dutch. He goes on to the controversial conclusion that Aruba is a Dutch colony:

Instruction language....Dutch period!!!!

The laws are in dutch, official documentation in the parliament is in Dutch..

At the end of the day, Aruba is a DUTCH colony

All these contributions reject the proposed change on the basis of the importance of Dutch for official purposes within governmental and judicial setting. The legal language and nationality presumably dictate Dutch as the inevitable language of instruction and as long as Aruba is part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, that will not change. As the following section will

¹⁵⁷ 'Mi stima mi idioma Papiamentu...pero NO ban lubida cu nos ta nasí cu e nacionalidad HULANDES, di cual ta hasi nos idioma Paterno HULANDES y NO papiamentu! Una bes nos paspoort ta hulandes esei kiermeen cu Hulandes tambe ta bira obligatorio. Papiamentu ta nos idioma materno y e idioma nos por papi'e na cas of "whatsoever"

demonstrate, the idea to change the language of instruction is rejected by some as a nationalist or patriotic act that would be a threat to the equilibrium in the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

5. Introduction of Papiamentu in education is a nationalist/ideological/... project - at the expense of the children's future.

Many contributors attack or question the underlying motives of the supporters of the change of the language of instruction. The change would not serve the future of the children, but other goals, mainly nationalist and patriotic in nature. Changing the language of instruction is considered to be jeopardizing the future of Aruba's youth on the basis of overt or covert nationalist goals. COMM 39 makes a direct link between what he calls a patriotic choice for Papiamentu and the future education of Aruban children: "As AUTHOR said "HOW FAR CAN ANYONE IN THIS WORLD GO WITH PAPIAMENTO", with all due respect to those who are 'PATRIOTIC' about Papiamentu. However we should not let 'PATRIOTISM' come between the future education of our ARUBAN children!!" COMM 9 describes this as follows: "so why would I jeopardize the future of my child's opportunities, with nationalism hidden under the symbols of anthem and a flag. I will not commit this crime and barbarity with my children and grandchildren. if you want to do this, go ahead, but not with my

children.”¹⁵⁸ COMM 2 labels this false pride and links a change of language of instruction to breaking up the ties with the Netherlands.: “This happens when people have false pride and think that Aruba does not need the Netherlands to survive, and introduce stupid laws.”¹⁵⁹ The people who introduce these laws are personally attacked by COMM 1 who challenges that “it is the same people who? have studied in the Netherlands in Dutch that come with something so wrong”¹⁶⁰, implying that the introduction of Papiamentu as language of instruction would take away the children's possibility to go and study in the Netherlands. Later COMM 1 further accuses the initiators of this change, claiming “so the children of those that impose this go to private schools in english and dutch”¹⁶¹. COMM 24 simply cannot believe that this project has been thought through: “Well ,well ,well, now the shit hit the fan and everything gone old mass. THESE PEOPLE HAVE SAW DUST FOR BRAINS OR WHAT?”

The author of the original post also refers to patriotism in response to COMM 30's defense of the change: “I know you are no trainee in the field of linguistics hence I would never doubt your aptitude nor knowledge, although I'm vaguely sensin' a little Patriotism. (which is good to an extent but it can take us into uncharted territories)” Further in the conversation he also refers to the “whole

¹⁵⁸ anto pakiko perjudica mi futuro di mi jui su oportunidad, cu nacionalismo skondi bao di un himno i un bandera como simbolo. ami no lo comete e crimen i barbaridad aki cu mi jui i ni mi nietonan. si abo kier hasie, abo hasie, pero no cu mi jui.

¹⁵⁹ 'Esaki ta pasa ora hende tin orguyo falso y ta pensa ku Aruba no tin mester di Hulanda pa sobreviví, y ta indrodusi leyman estúpido.'

¹⁶⁰ 'ta mesun hendenan cu a studia na hulanda na hulandes ta bini cu algo wrong asina'

¹⁶¹ 'anto esnan cu ta pusha e cos aki nan yui nan mes ta bai skol priva cu engels y hulandes'

Aruba Dushi tera thing", explicitly referring to the first line of the Aruban national anthem, Aruba Dushi Tera: "I don't mind they make nos dushi Papiamento Mandatory say. A few hours a week. You know for the whole " Aruba Dushi tera thing but as Instructie taal, it's like pushin' it way overboard!!"

Other contributors' main focus is on the destructive effect of this change on the future of the children and make an appeal to reason. COMM 13 accepts that it is an idea to teach Papiamento as a subject but that the medium of instruction should be Dutch, followed by the outcry "realistisch wezen!!", "be real"¹⁶², implying that the change is not realistic at all. The sense of urgency among some of the participants in the conversation is high: COMM 22 warns for the introduction of Papiamento in primary education on the basis of the alleged failure – untrue, see e.g. (Pereira & Römer-Dijkhoff, Papiaments van levensbelang voor de ontwikkeling van de leerlingen van Aruba, Curaçao en Bonaire., 2020, p. 29) - of such in Curaçao: "Gentlemen Frank Martinus Arion has tried this in Curaçao, IT DID NOT WORK!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!"¹⁶³ Apparently the introduction did fail in Curaçao, also in Bonaire they had to deal with "the same problem" and the educational system is destroying the children's future. COMM 35: "AUTHOR we had the same problem here in Bonaire. After 5 years they still don't getting it. They are destroying our children's future. God Help

¹⁶² 'Bo or duna Papiamento lessen un paar di biaha pa siman pa hende sinja Papua I skirbi nan idioma, pero instructie taal mester ta Hulandes, mester sinja Papia I skirbi hulandes drechi, presentaties, brieven schrijven, sinja ingles tambe, realistisch wezen!!'

¹⁶³ 'Shon-nan Frank Martinus Arion a purbe na Korsow, E NO A FUNKSHONA!!!!!!!!!!!!!!'

them.” Children in these school will become test rabbits of a project that the government of Aruba wants to invent according to COMM 8¹⁶⁴.

Many of the opponents of the change admit that the system fails one way or another. However, trust in the soundness of the project is so low that COMM 33 concludes that nobody will succeed anymore: “so because the majority of the children drown in dutch, we should just give up and let the ones that succeed fail with the rest ? I myself don't think that we should blame the children, but the Teachers what are not sufficiently proficient in Dutch they themselves are the problem..”¹⁶⁵

6. The problem of the education system is not the language of instruction.

Some of the contributors who oppose the introduction of the pilot project confirm that the education system has its problems, but changing the language of instruction will not solve these problems. COMM 8 states: “the elderly are not 100% proficient in papiamento nor the school teachers that teach papiamento are 100% proficient in papiamento no it is not the languages that is the problem for these children.”¹⁶⁶ The same contributor

¹⁶⁴ COMM 8 'paso e sunan cu ta bai e scol nan ey lo ta proof konijn di un projecto cu gobierna kier bin inventa cune!!'

¹⁶⁵ 'dus paso mayoria di mucha ta hoga den hulandes, mester djis give up y laga e otronan cu si ta slaag faya cu e resto ? Ami mes ta kere cu no ta e muchanan su falta, pero e Instructornan cu no sa domina e hulandes nan mes cu ta e problema..'

¹⁶⁶ 'ni e biew nan di antes por domina papiamento 100% Ni e jufrouwnan cu ta dun papiamento sa papiamento 100% no ta e idioma nan ta e problema pe mucha nan ki.

later on fills in what that problem would be, arguing that the well paying jobs are taken by foreigners, so Aruban students are not motivated to study: “if they would know that they go to school and would get a good job they would enjoy studying... but all these foreigners have all the positions and thing...”¹⁶⁷

From negative to positive appreciations of the reform

The recurrence of negative statements that reject change in the education system makes it very clear that in this conversation, opposition to change is big. In many contributions, the fact that the education system fails the students, is not contradicted. However, the main point brought forwards is not the failure of the system, but the absurdity or inadequateness of the proposed change. Armed with arguments on the intrinsic quality of languages, the extrinsic symbolic value of languages for cohesion in the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the economic value of languages, the participants reject the change vehemently.

Argumentation in support of the project was brought forward by a minority consisting of 14 participants in this discussion that defended the introduction of the pilot project. Their defense of the project was mainly based on the importance of the mother tongue as language of instruction for educational success, the fact that the project is research-based, the fact that the current

¹⁶⁷ 'si nan sa nan ta bai scol y caba haja un trabow sigur nan ta studia cu smaak... but all these stranheros having all the positions and thing...'

system is failing and change is needed, and the fact that the argument that Dutch would open the world for the children in schools is flawed.

***1. If you are taught in your mother tongue,
you are much more likely to be successful,
including learning other languages***

A number of participants make the point that if your academic formation is provided in your mother tongue or habitual language, you are much more likely to be successful in that formation, as well as in learning other languages. These participants refer to common sense, proof, research and institutional authority to underscore the validity of their arguments. Common sense and proof are called upon by COMM 19, who states that “Everybody in the world knows and it is proven that a child learns better in it's mother tongue, especially during Kindergarten and primary school. Therefore multilingual education is right.”¹⁶⁸ This contributor explicitly avoids discussion on the use of languages in secondary education instead focusing on Kindergarten and primary school. A second contributor to this discussion, COMM 10, makes the point that it is proven that if a child is brought up in one language, it learns to express itself in its birth language. That means that when it succeeds in achieving 100% proficiency in its language, that is an advantage as then it can

¹⁶⁸ Ta mundialmente conoci y prueba cu un mucha ta siña miho den su idioma materno, sigur durante enseñansa preparatorio y primario/basico. Pesey un scol un enseñansa multilingual ta na su lugar.

learn a second language.”¹⁶⁹ The same contributor also builds in an implicit defense against the argument that speakers of other languages would be the victims of this change in policy: “The majority of households in Aruba speak Papiamentu, those that choose to speak another language is their personal choice!” It is significant to note that this contribution is in Papiamentu, except for the last four words, that were written in English.¹⁷⁰ COMM 32 affirms the research-based character of education in the mother tongue, and adds a comment on the fundamental inequality of the position of children from Aruba in comparison to children from Curaçao, also referencing to the incorrect assertion that children in Aruba and Curaçao would be “lazy”. “Studies have proven that is you are taught in your maternal tongue, you are more likely to succeed in other languages including Dutch. So please stop comparing "lazy" Aruban and Curaçaoan kids to Dutch kids. They have a huge advantage in that they are taught in their mother tongue and ABC children are not.”

COMM 38 adds to the discussion that view that change always brings resistance, and that part of that resistance is based on a lack of information as Dutch will remain a subject in school¹⁷¹. This observation that resistance is grounded in lack of information is buttressed by references of authority, i.e. by

¹⁶⁹ Ta bewezen cu un mucha cu di chikito ta wordo lanta bou di 1 idioma lo siña expresa su mes na su idioma natal! Esey kiermen cu si e por 'domina' su idioma 100% ta den un voordeel p'e, p'e por siña een tweede taal

¹⁷⁰ Y mayoria cas na Aruba ta papia papiamentu, e famianan cu ta kies pa papia otro idioma is their personal choice!

¹⁷¹ Cambio semper ta trece resistencia, mas ainda ora ns falta informacion di e 'big picture': Hulandes ta KEDA den scol!!!

references to scholarly research: “All research (Unesco) demonstrates that people have more opportunity to reach their potential when they are educated in their mother tongue (the one that they are proficient in). In many places in the world they do this, even in Frysia... and in Spain you have Catalan ... etc. Let’s give our children a chance too.”¹⁷² This statement confirms that this contributor is of the opinion that the current system with Dutch as language of instruction does not give students a (fair) chance and that Aruba is/should? not reinvent the wheel. Finally, the contributor continues with a reconfirmation of the maintenance of Dutch: “Remember, in the new system they will keep on getting Dutch ... from Kindergarten onwards, it is the language of instruction that will become Papiamentu.”¹⁷³

2. This project follows a research-based model

As already pointed out in the previous paragraph, some of the supporters of the shift in policy refer to scholarly authority, i.e. to the fact the decision is informed by research, and make that authority claim their main argument. This is for example illustrated by COMM 12 who focuses on the long term character of the research, making the point that the research has been thorough and states that “Research has been going on for years and COMM 10

¹⁷² Tur investigacion (Unesco) ta muestra cu hende tin hopi mas chens pa yega nn potencial door di keda educa den nan idioma materno (esun cu nan ta domina). Ma ta tur caminda na mundo ta hacie tambe hasta Friesland... y na Spaña tin Catalan ... etc. Ban duna ns muchanan tambe un chens.

¹⁷³ Y corda, den e sistema nobo aki nan ta keda haya Hulandes ... desde kleuter caba, ta e voertaal/instructietaal ta bira Papiamentu.

mentions the findings... most children struggle because the dutch comes to them like chinese at such a young age with no reference to any native language...”

COMM 30 does not only mention research, but also urges contributors to study the information provided, to understand the pilot-character of this project and finally explains that a final decision will be taken on the basis of the research into the outcomes of the pilot: “See link for more accurate info on the didactical methods of the multilingual school. Remember it is a pilot project so it’s linked to research. The project will continue based on the results of research. The kids in the kindergarten have already shown to be quite positive towards all languages including Dutch. This because of the methods used. Internationally this method of language acquisition and language comprehension has proven to be quite successful. These discussions are often fruitless without data based on research.”

The same COMM 30 also reflects on the fact that research has demonstrated that education through adequate educational models (probably referring to Dutch as a Foreign Language didactics) will yield better results than less adequate but high-exposure methods:

Research has also shown that it’s not the quantity of Dutch or any other language in schools that determines the aptitude in a language but rather the Quality (through more appropriate didactical methods) of the language given. In other words, less Dutch can be given but the How determines the level of mastery.

Finally COMM 14 is disappointed by the negativity of the comments and also focuses on the success the approach has scored in many other countries and confirms that generations of Arubans have been struggling with Dutch because they never developed their proficiency in Papiamentu.¹⁷⁴

3. The current system is failing the children, so we should welcome change

One thing that the author of the original post agrees to, is the fact that the current system is failing the children. With regard to proficiency in Dutch the author states that “There are many Aruban children that are SMART and still they do not understand half of the Dutch language when the exam day comes.”¹⁷⁵ And he ties that proficiency into other aspects of learning and development as he makes the claim that he sees “INTELLIGENT kids suffer the psychologische [psychological] tests because of the lack of Dutch comprehension.”¹⁷⁶ This is supported by COMM 25 who claims that “As things

¹⁷⁴ Wak mi ta hanja asina jammer cu hende ta duna asina negatieve comments. E ta bewezen (hopi otro lugarnan na mundo) cu ora un mucha sinja e taal di su lugar dus pa nos esei ta Papiamentu e lo por mehora su otro taalnan miho. Pesei hopi generations na Aruba a struggle cu Hulandes pasobra nan nunca no a ontwikkkel nan Papiamentu taal. Mi ta hanjele hopi great cu Aruba a tuma un step.

¹⁷⁵ Tin hopi mucha Arubano cu ta SABI y toch no ta compronde mitar di e Idioma Hulandes ora examen dag jega.

¹⁷⁶ E idioma Hulandes (na Aruba) ta biba SOLAMENTE den cura di scol. Ningun otro caminda na Aruba ta papia Hulanen.

stand now, with Dutch, many of our children cannot reach their full potential”¹⁷⁷.

COMM 15 further illustrates the failure of the school system as “The Dutch language (in Aruba) only lives within the school. Nowhere else in Aruba Dutch is spoken.” After that observation this contributor makes the point that Dutch language of instruction education actually leads to failure of the majority in favor of a small minority that goes to study in the Netherlands: “Well, if YOU think that Dutch is the language that ALL children in Aruba must learn and be proficient in and have as language of instruction from Kindergarten to HAVO/VWO in order to go study abroad: I want to say this: Thousands of children are in school and drown in Dutch, just for a handful the go to study in the Netherlands. More than 50 % of all children that finish HAVO/VWO/EPI do not go to the Netherlands. Moreover, we should be even more worried about 50% of the children in Aruba that do not even complete EPI nor HAVO nor VWO!”¹⁷⁸ So, apart from the fact that this contributor observes that the focus on Dutch for students that go to the Netherlands misses the point, the

¹⁷⁷ Manera cu e ta awor aki, cu e hulandes, ta hopi di nos yiunan no por saca tur e potencial cu nan tin den nan.

¹⁷⁸ Awo, si ABO kier kere cu ta Hulandes ta e idioma cu TUR mucha na Aruba mester siña y domina y tin e como idioma di instruccion desde scol preparatorio (=kleuter) te ora e caba HAVO/VWOPA e bay studia afo: mi kier bisa esaki: Miles di mucha ta na scol y ta hoga cu e Hulandes, djis pa e algunnan cu ta bay sigui studia na HULANDA. Mas cu 50% di tur mucha cu caba EPI/HAVO/VWO no ta bay Hulanda. Mas ainda nos mester ta preocupa pa e echo cu mas cu 50% di tur e muchanan na Aruba no ta caba ni EPI, ni HAVO, ni VWO.

additional point is that that focus constitutes a major obstacle for the children in the school system.

COMM 30 ties the failure of the system in the colonial character of the system in place, sees it a basis for an inferiority complex, while praising what comes from abroad (including the educational system and the language) as superior. As such, COMM 30 calls for change due to the fact that the system fails the children and consists a continuation of colonial power relations:

“Immersion” techniques are from the colonial era and almost make it a crime to rely on your own resources. One big consequence is that our kids may grow up with an “inferiority complex” unaware of their true potential and heritage. A remnant hereof is the fact that often times whatever is LOCAL is seen as INFERIOR and whatever is FOREIGN is seen as SUPERIOR (This is not always the case). This in the case of academics, intellectuals, teachers, professionals and yes even musicians AUTHOR, who put on a show for over 3 hours week in, week out and yet never get the respect and financial benefits they deserve as compared to foreign acts.

COMM 50 clearly focuses on the need for change: “Have a little faith in our own 'product'....the old system has not worked for everyone...now it will...let us believe in our selves!!!” and finally COMM 51 reflects on the abnormality of the Dutch language of instruction, serving the good of 5% of the population, and the normality of a multilingual school in a multilingual society.

Instead of having 5 percent of our population graduate with a high school diploma of a higher level, we are now aiming on having at least 40 percent of the population reaching the higher levels of education. And the best way to get this done is to give them a better start. By teaching our kids the 4 main languages in a proper way, by teaching them to read and write in the language that they can hear and practice with everyone everyday... we are actually creating a normal educational environment... Hence.... the Dutch educational system was an abnormal situation...that has finally been attacked. Knowledge is power... and by handing our kids knowledge in their own native language, we are empowering our youth!

COMM 51 agrees to/with? this, and compares language to a key that can be used to open students' minds, concluding that despite the effort the children put in, that does not mean that the system works:

!You simply can't open up the doors to their minds if you use the wrong key... And Dutch is the wrong key to begin our children's education with. A lot of doors stay closed and simply because some kids manage crawling through a window, others break down the door by working so hard, even though they shouldn't have to be putting in so much effort at such a young age... doesn't mean that the system as it is now, WORKS!!

Later on, the same COMM 51 also points out the alienating effect these linguistic practices may have on the involvement of parents in the children's education, calling it a trauma that is in a way internalized and normalized:

For generations, parents have not been able to do their part in their children's education, because of the Dutch language. Because of the trauma's many parents have of their experience in school and all the times they themselves failed. Our community suffers from what I call Educational Post Traumatic Stress and we have been for such a long time, that we think it's normal.

4. Neither Dutch nor Papiamentu are world languages, Dutch will not open the world to you

The author of the original post mentions that “The little bit of Dutch in class will not be enough” as there are so many television channels in English and Spanish, and only one in Dutch.¹⁷⁹ As such he confirms the lack of presence of Dutch media channels which actually points at another issue: the lack of international potential of the Dutch language in media, in competition with Spanish and English.¹⁸⁰ This is confirmed by COMM 32 who states that “People on the ABC islands can go as far with Papiamentu/u as they can with Dutch. Dutch is only spoken in The Netherlands with variants spoken in South Africa and Suriname.” The functionality of languages for international development

¹⁷⁹ Canal 11 refers to television channel 11, BVN (Het Beste van Vlaanderen en Nederland), an international broadcasting channel that provides Dutch and Flemish television programs for expats. In the year this post was placed, the Dutch public broadcasts of Nederland 1, 2 and 3 (later NPO 1, 2 and 3) were only available at extra cost, only

¹⁸⁰ E tiki Hulandes durante les mes no ta suficiente. 40 y pico Canal di television y pover canal 11 su so ta Hulandes mientras cu como 10 na Spanjo.

is a matter of concern, also for opponents of the switch: COMM 9 states that “Anyhow, I will always be against Papiamentu in schools as i can not go anywhere with it.”¹⁸¹ Not everyone agrees with this however, as for instance COMM 25, who states that “The use of our sweet Papiamentu is an instrument to make our youth strong and able to learn all other languages in the world.”¹⁸²

Other reflections

Apart from the structurally returning observations on the (un)desirable character of the Skol Multilingual listed above, there are a number of contributions that also deserve mentioning.

COMM 32 interprets the responses to this post that reject this shift to Papiamentu as a lack of love for Papiamentu and a lack of recognition for the unique characteristics of this language. In this response, this contributor adduces a number of interesting linguistic insights:

It's a shame that we don't collectively have a love for Papiamentu/u as a national language. Papiamentu/u is the ONLY creole in the world where tonal inferences play a big role. Outside of the Dutch Caribbean the language is seen as a model for success for other creoles and

¹⁸¹ anyhow papiamentu na school, semper lo mi keda contra dje, pasobra mi no por bai ningun caminda cu ne

¹⁸² Uso di nos dushii Papiamentu ta un instrumento pa haci nos hobennan fuerte y dispuesto pa sinja tur otro idiomanan na mundo

languages in general. It's a shame that we can't see its worth in the same way.

COMM 27 reflects on the origins of the discussion, pointing out that the discussion had not taken place if there would have been sufficient information about the multilingual school. The department involved (the department of education) is reproached for not providing sufficient information:

Wauw!

Personal opinion: I think that this discussion exists because there is insufficient information about the introduction of the Proyecto Scol Multilingual. I think that both sides have brought forward many arguments that could have been avoided if the department involved had taken the trouble to first inform the population on the introduction of Papiamento as language of instruction.¹⁸³

COMM 32 confirms that perceived lack of information or misinformation, refraining from blaming one or another institution, and recognizes that misinformation can be the basis for a misapprehension of Papiamento as a language: "Reading some comments on a post about putting Papiamento in school in Aruba. Unfortunately, I was saddened to see that many of the people

¹⁸³ Wauw!

Opinion personal: Mi ta kere cu tur e discusion aki ta bin como cu no tabata tin suficiente informacion tocante e introduccion di Proyecto Scol Multilingual. Mi ta kere cu di tur dos banda tin hopi argumento ta bin dilanti cu por a wordo evita si e departamento concerni a tuma e molester pa informa e pueblo prome tocante e introduccion di Papiamento como idioma di instruccion.

commenting were misinformed. The vitriol that they were spitting against Papiamento is absurd”

COMM 34 does not speak out for or against the introduction of the PSML, but makes the point that Aruba should invest more in Papiamento and that people should be more interested in the language and make a better effort to speak it well.¹⁸⁴ As such she invokes the structural neglect for the language over the decades and the need for structural support for Papiamento in order for the introduction of the language in education to be successful.

At a certain point in the discussion, the author of the original post also refers to the language policy of the University of Aruba (introduced in June 2012, and explained in my chapter X) that prescribes Dutch and English as the official languages of professional communication for the institute:

Then, you COMM 30, should explain me why you guys are pushin' for Papiamento in the early years of education WHILE (happenin' NOW) Papiamento is bein' ELIMINATED from the Aruban University..... It makes NO sense.!! You all must sit together again and rethink this. Very contradictory if you ask me.!!

The use of capitals, the interpunction, and the lexical choices all underscore the emotional intensity and confusion of this discussion that pushes people further apart, and will not bring them closer if the participants do not

¹⁸⁴ Lesando reaction mi ta bin ripara cu nos mester inverti mas den papiamento. Hopi ta skirbi mita den Papiamento y mita den un otro idioma. Ban ta mas interesa den nos idioma y hasi ma's esfuerso pa papie mihor!

recognize the fundamentally different assumptions and belief systems that underly their opinions on language, education, and society.

5.3.3 The announcement of the introduction of the Papiamentu based Scol Multilingual

On December 11, 2017, the Aruban Minister of Education, announces the gradual introduction of the Scol Multilingual in the Aruban education system, including the use of Papiamentu as first language of instruction, as described in section 5.2. of this chapter. The announcement drew a storm of critique, on the one hand because part of the population was and is far from convinced that the use of Papiamentu would be beneficial, on the other hand because the way in which it was announced met with a lot of resistance, even from coalition partners of the same government. This resistance was partly justified by the fact that the announcement was quite abrupt and led people to believe that the minister wanted to introduce a full educational reform in only two weeks time. However, the strength of the resistance is also representative for the fact that any reform that moves away from the use of Dutch is framed as unprepared or not thought through, similar to the aggressive criticism that was voiced by AUTH 1 in section 5.3.2.

The main post about the introduction of the Scol Multilingual (FB 22 2017 12 11) was put on Facebook by the minister of education, Rudy Lampe himself. He shares a scan of the newspaper publication (in noticiacla.com) of the announcement of the implementation of the multilingual school in Aruba. The post draws 223 comments, 9 shares and 69 emoticons. With a total of almost 19000 words, this is the longest of the discussions that was identified for this study.

A couple of participants in the discussion were very active: there were 62 contributions by COMM 100, 21 by COMM 159, 14 by COMM 105 and 11 by COMM 115. These had all been identified as participants in earlier discussions. The last one was responsible for almost 30% of the wordcount in this discussion as this contributor included lengthy contributions on language, political development, human rights, sovereignty and nationality in the discussion.

The discussion did not only focus on the introduction of the multilingual school, but also on other aspects of the school system like management, differences between public and special education etcetera. The discussion ends in three lengthy contributions by COMM 115 that did not receive any more responses or emoticons and have not been included in this analysis.

The analysis in this section follows the same structure as the analysis presented in section 5.3.2.

1. It used to be better in the past... I went to school in Dutch, I was successful, so the system is successful

COMM 242 is one of the early contributors the first one to speak out and be implicitly critical about this change: “So what you are saying is that children are born stupid nowadays, as I, my brother and my children have been taught in Dutch.... And we have not fallen behind! On the contrary ... So watch out,

think well about what you write.”¹⁸⁵ Later on, the same COMM 242 states that “imposing Papiamentu in schools will guarantee nothing. Moreover, I see this becoming a horrible disaster, one more thing for the world (and especially the Netherlands) to laugh at us.”¹⁸⁶ And, also by COMM 242, “Children with Latin American parents that only speak Spanish at home and that never had a cent for extra tuition, speak Papiamentu, Dutch, English and French so they have high grades and are in VWO? But that is not why ... children just have that capacity, their brain is like a sponge.”¹⁸⁷ COMM 100 contributes that “In the time of the sisters at Maria College it appears that it was forbidden for a while to speak Papiamentu. I would not go that far but in class Dutch should be the language. If the teacher does not speak sufficient Dutch to teach in it, the teacher's salary should be reconsidered.”¹⁸⁸

COMM 250 claims to have asked the minister “What about the children that speak Dutch at home and can not enter SPCOA or Schakel for financial

¹⁸⁵ Muchanan lo mester ta naciendo dom anto, pasobra, tanto ami, mi ruman y mi yiunan a haña enseñansa na Hulandes ... Y nos niun a keda atras ni wordo perhudica! Alcontrario ... Dus, wak bon , pensa bon loke bo ta skirbi!

¹⁸⁶ Pusha Papiamentu na scol no ta bay ta garantia pa nada. Mas bien, ami ta wak cu e lo para bira un tremendo desaster y lo ta un cos mas den e rij pa mundo hari nos (vooral Hulanda mes) ...

¹⁸⁷ yiunan di hende bashi latino cu ta papia solamente Spaño na cas, nunca twtin ni un cent extra pa paga bijles, ta papia Papiamentu, Hulandes, Ingles y Frances pa tin puntonan halto y ta den vwo? Pero no ta pesey ... muchanan gewoonweg tin e capacidad ey. Nan mente ta manera un spons

¹⁸⁸ Tempo di e soernan na Maria College parce tabata prohibi pa un periode pa papia papiamentu. Wel di e leuw mi no kier bay pero den klas lesnan mester ta duna na hulandes. Si e leerkracht no tin dominio di hulandes pa duna les drechi mester considera e pago cu ta hanja.

reasons?"¹⁸⁹, applauded by COMM 246 who asks to be informed about the minister's answer as "It is the same for parents who speak papiamento at home but who want their children to be educated in a "regular" education system where they are taught in Dutch (same as we had in the past 75+ years)!"¹⁹⁰ COMM 100 further responds to this that "we would go back to the past. Those with money will send their children to the best schools and the "paupers" must be happy with a creole school."¹⁹¹

COMM 248 draws the attention to the fact that many are misrepresenting history: "You are forgetting the history that it were the *broeders* themselves who initiated the struggle for Papiamento with Trupialen¹⁹² and the composition of songs in Papiamento and it were they who allowed Papiamento in the playground and promoted that local children would go to study in the Netherlands and become local teachers that could promote Papiamento in schools."¹⁹³ COMM 100 responds to this "what happened long time ago in the past may have been good but should be no guiding principle

¹⁸⁹ What about e muchanan cu ta papia Hulandes na cas y cu no por dreña SPCOA of de Schakel pa motibo di placa?

¹⁹⁰ Mescos cu e ouders nan cu ta papia papiamento na cas cu ta desea di tene nan yiunan den e sistema "regular" unda nan ta worde instrui na Hulandes (mescos cu nos tur den e ultimo 75+ añanan)!

¹⁹¹ Nos lo bolbe pa antanjo. Esnan cu tin placa por manda nan yiunan na scoolnan mas mihor y e "armoedzaaiers" mester ta contento cu nan scool cryoyo.

¹⁹² A choir in Aruba

¹⁹³ Boso ta lubida historia cu e broeder nan mes a cuminsa lucha pa e idioma papiamento cu Trupialen y compone cantica na Papiamento y nan a cuminsa laga papiamento riba speelplaats y promove estudiante lokaal pa bai studia Hulanda y bira asi asina meneer y juffrouw nan lokaal pa promove papiamento na skol!

for the present”¹⁹⁴ and wonders “If in a couple of years there will be thousands of children with good education, where will they find a job? One that pays properly? The Netherlands (with EU) will be the only country that will accept them.”¹⁹⁵

COMM 246 also adds another perspective and questions the motives of those in favor: “Why blame the system? You have gone through this system and made it ... Why should we take something that does NOT work in another country and experiment with people’s children as test rabbits!!! Remarkable is that most people who shout out the hardest about this have no children of themselves..... Hmmmm....”¹⁹⁶

2. If you teach children in Papiamentu, they will not be able to succeed in higher education

COMM 242 reminds the followers that we should “not forget that the majority of our children go to the Netherlands to follow their studies there and many fail because of their Dutch proficiency.”¹⁹⁷ This is also confirmed later on by COMM 243. COMM 245 also refers to this, and further asks “How many that

¹⁹⁴ kico a pasa basta anja pasa ta bon pero e no mester ta un guia principal.

¹⁹⁵ Si den algun anja tin miles di muchanan cu un bon opleiding na Aruba, unda lo busca trabao ? Cu ta paga drechi. Hulanda (cu EU) ta e unico pais afor cu por acceptanan.

¹⁹⁶ Pakiko blame e sistema? Abo a pasa den e sistema normal y bo a make it ... Pakiko mester hasi algo cu NO a funciona na otro pais pero awor ta bin hunga “proefkonijn” cu jiunan y/of nietonan di otro!!! Remarcabel ta cu mayoria di esnan cu ta gritando mas duru pa un cambio no tin jiu Hmmmm

¹⁹⁷ Y No lubida, mayoria di nos muchanan ta bay Hulanda pa sigui nan estudio eynan y hopi ta faya dor di nan Hulandes

went to study in the Netherlands came back to work here. All those that are in favor, remember that their children are grown up and abroad. This will not help ARUBANS. It is more likely to be for strangers that come to live here.”¹⁹⁸ [...] “It is strange that the ministers themselves employ people at their offices with better proficiency in Dutch.”¹⁹⁹

3. Papiamentu is an incomplete language that is not fit for academic use, is not international

COMM 100 remarks that “when it comes to language and education the reform will create "a division between those with money and those without"”²⁰⁰, implying that those with money will be able to send their children to Dutch - elite - schools, and furthermore points out that as opposed to “the Netherlands where children [in all provinces] are taught in ABN(ederlands)”²⁰¹, there is no such uniformity in the Caribbean as “In Aruba there is the etymological spelling of Papiamentu and in Curaçao the phonological spelling. The wise that keep on pushing Papiamentu in schools do not answer questions about that.”²⁰² When it comes to the elite-position of Dutch education, COMM 105 seems to confirm COMM 100's statement by

¹⁹⁸ Cuanto cu a bai studia na hulanda a bin back pa traja aki. Tur cu ta na fabor ripara bn nan yuinan ta grandi y afor. E yudansa aki no ta pa ARUBIANO. E ta mas bien pa e extranjeronan cu ta bin biba aki.

¹⁹⁹ Straño ta cu ministers nan a tuma hende na nan buro tur tur cu un bon kennis di hulandes

²⁰⁰ Den e asunto di idioma na school parce cu lo bin un division entre esnan cu placa y esnan cu no tin.

²⁰¹ Na Hulanda un mucha ta hanja les den ABN(ederlands)

²⁰² Na Aruba tin etymologische schrift pa papiamentu y na Corsow fonologisch. E "sabionan"cu ta pusha papiamentu na school no ta contesta preguntanan ariba esey.

stating that: “I have decided to send my children to De Schakel which is a private Dutch primary school here as I wanted to teach them good Dutch, and that has happened. I could afford it. It is terrible that we have to pay a lot of money to send our children to an ordinary primary school where teachers are native speakers of Dutch and as such my children can have a decent basis in Dutch.”²⁰³ In this statement, COMM 105 presents the expectation that exceptional elite education would be the standard, as the chosen expensive private school would be an *ordinary* school and it would be *terrible* to have to pay a lot of money for that school.

COMM 159 keeps it simple: “Papiamento has no future.”²⁰⁴ And later adds that “For me Papiamento is not a language and it never will be. You cannot translate anything in Papiamento on Google. Papiamento is but a dialect that came from cape verde in the times of slavery.”²⁰⁵

COMM 100 further adds later in the conversation “Papiamento is our language but we have to be aware of its limitations There are politicians that seem to give the impression that Aruba is larger than Australia.”²⁰⁶

²⁰³ Mi a dicidi pa mandanan tur De Schakel cual ta un basisschool priva di Hulandes akinan ya cu mi tabata kier nan siña un bon hulandes y esey a pasa. Mi tbt por a afford e. Erg cu nos mester paga hopi placa pa nos yiunan por atende un gewone basisschool caminda docentenan ta native hulandes y asina mi yiunan haya un bon basis di Hulandes

²⁰⁴ Papiamento no tin futuro.

²⁰⁵ Pami papiamento no ta idioma y nunca lo ta. Ni ariba google bo por vertaal nada na papiamento. Papiamento ta djis un dialect ku a bin di cabo verde tempo di sklabitut.

²⁰⁶ Papiamento ta nos idioma pero nos mester ta consiente di su limitacionnan Tin politiconan cu parce ta duna impresion cu Aruba ta mas grandi cu Australia.

The discussion mainly takes place in Papiamentu, leading COMM 244 to conclude: “With due respect, We are all communicating in Papiamentu and then you want to tell me that we can not do anything with that language?”²⁰⁷

4. Dutch is the language of the law and of administration, so we can not change the language of instruction

COMM 258 claims to be a teacher in primary education and supports the introduction of the multilingual school. “Our education pose a threat our children by teaching them in Dutch, a foreign language for the majority of children.”²⁰⁸ However, COMM 115 disagrees strongly:

Ms. COMM 258, not meaning to disrespect anybody, as a teacher, how can you come to the conclusion that the Dutch language POSES A THREAT to our children in the schools in Aruba?? That is a grave disrespect and almost a humiliation for the true language Dutch, and even for the ‘INNATE’ Dutch nationality of our children is the school banks of Aruba.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁷ Cu tur respet - Nos tur ta communicando den papiamentu cu otro y bo kier bisami cu nos no por haci nada cune?

²⁰⁸ Nos enseñansa ta perhudica nos muchanan door di duna nan enseñansa na Hulandes, un idioma aheno pa mayoria mucha.

²⁰⁹ Sra. COMM 258, sin falta respet na niun hende, como docente, con bo persona por a yega na e conclusion cu e idioma Hulandes ta PERHUDICA nos muchanan na scolnan na Aruba ?? Esaki ta un profundo menosprecio y hasta humiliacion pa e berdadero idioma Hulandes, y

...

COMM 115 further elaborates on the “Sacred Dutch RIGHTS”²¹⁰ that are derived from Dutch citizenship for “all innocent creatures BORN with the Dutch nationality in Aruba”²¹¹ The “status of OFFICIAL LANGUAGE for the Beloved Little Language Papiamento serves to PUSH the Dutch Language out of education in the “DUTCH Caribbean”. The AUTONOMY would be to Offer our Respected and Venerable DUTCH people DUTIES ONLY, WITHOUT DUTCH RIGHTS.”²¹² COMM 115 calls the officialization of Papiamento “a HEAVY ERROR”²¹³ as “our Beloved Language is severely POOR in words in comparison with the true language of the sacred Dutch rights”²¹⁴, achieving equality between Papiamento and Dutch (or English or Spanish) would be a “FARCE”, internet access would be limited, studying medicine would become impossible as “the majority of organs have no name in Papiamento”.²¹⁵ Our Papiamento is more like a BROKEN version of the True Spanish language. More than 70% of the words are adopted or adapted from Spanish. Sure, Papiamento has a place

dimes tambe pa e nacionalidad Hulandes “NACI” cual nos muchanan ta sinta den bankinan di scol cu ne na Aruba.

²¹⁰ Sagrado DERECHONAN Hulandes

²¹¹ Tur Nos Criaturanan Inocente NACI cu e nacionalidad Hulandes na Aruba

²¹² a haci Nos Lenguage Chikito Stima Papiamento(u) un “IDIOMA OFICIAL”, pa “SACA” e Idioma Hulandes for di e Ramonan di Enseñanza den “Caribe HULANDES”. E “AUTONOMIANAN” ta pa Pone “Nos Pueblonan HULANDES Respeta Cumpli” cu “DEBERNAN SO”, “SIN DERECHONAN HULANDES”

²¹³ un “GRAVISIMO EROR”.

²¹⁴ e Hecho cu Nos Lenguage Stima ta “Severamente POBER na Palabra” compara cu e Berdadero Idioma di “NOS SAGRADO DERECHONAN HULANDES”

²¹⁵ NO Tin Papabra pa Nan den Nos Papiamento(u)

within the confines of our schools, but ONLY as a SUBJECT, and NOT as a VEHICLE of instruction as it is Severly POOR in Words.”²¹⁶

COMM 100 also confirms the importance of the Dutch language for the connection with the Netherlands, but this time from a labor-economic perspective as the Netherlands is portrayed as the safety net for the Aruban labor force:

When Lago closed²¹⁷ many of the management staff have found work in the Netherlands, Brunei, Australia and other countries. Those in lower functions went to the Netherlands to parasitize on the welfare systems to which they had not contributed. How many of those lower ranked have found work in the US, Venezuela, Colombia, the Soviet Union, China or other countries? Or even better, have parasitized the welfare systems of these countries?²¹⁸

²¹⁶ Nos Papiamento cu mas bien ta un “QUEBRADA” di e Berdadero Idioma Spaño. Mas di “70%” ta palabranan Adopta o Adapta di Spaño. Sigur Nos Papiamento(u) Stima lo mester ta den nos ramonan di enseñaza na scol, pero “SOLAMENTE” como “VAK” y “NO VEHICULO” esta di instruccion debi cu e ta Severamente POBER na Palabra.

²¹⁷ The oil refinery in San Nicolas that closed in 1985 at the eve of Aruban Status Aparte

²¹⁸ Tempo Lago a sera varios di esnan cu rango halto ayaden a logra di hanja bon trabao na Hulanda, Brunei, Australia y otro paisnan. Di esnan cu rango mas abao varios a bay Hulanda pa parasita ariba e sociale uitkeringen pa cual nan nunca a contribui. Cuanto di rango mas abao a hanja mesun trabao bon paga na USA, Venezuela, Colombia, Union Sovietico, China o otro pais ? O mas mihor parasita ariba e sociale uikeringen di e paisnan ey.

**5. Introduction of Papiamentu in education is
a nationalist/ideological/... project - at the
expense of the children's future**

In this discussion many speak out and claim that the introduction of Papiamentu would be an experiment, an ideological project by people who do not care about the future of the children of Aruba, or are blinded by ideology. COMM 246 cries out: "Those in favor either have NO children or cousins or they have no problems sending them to private schools... Isn't it?"²¹⁹ COMM 247 refers to the presumed failure of Papiamentu as language of instruction in Curaçao:

The best example of Papiamentu in school is Curaçao. I taught at an SBO school where children did NOT speak NOR write Dutch. Insufficient for open book tests plus use of computer. Questions were multiple choice!!! Why???? Because Papiamentu in school is a disaster!! A lost generation!! And now how to turn that back??? Where will they get the money to buy the methods in Dutch that they have thrown out?²²⁰

²¹⁹ Esnan voor either NO tin jiu ni nieto y si nan tin nan no tin e problema financiero pa hinca nan den un skol priva Toch?

²²⁰ E miho ehempel di papiamentu ku a bai skol ta na Korsow. Mi ta duna les na un SBO kaminda studiante nan no ta NI papia NI por skibi hulandes. Onvoldoende pa toetsen di open boek plus uzo di kompuiter. Vragen nan ta multiple choice!!! Dikon ???? Pasobrapaiamentu na skol a resulta den un desaster!! Un generashon perjudika!! Awor kon ta bai draai e bek??? Di unda ta saka e sen pa kumpra tur e metodo nan na hulandes ku a resulta den koi shushi???

Later on COMM 247 adds that “a lot of money was invested in the introduction of Papiamentu in Curaçao. The result was so poor with as a consequence that the education has become even MORE elitist. Private schools in Dutch have popped up like mushrooms !!”²²¹ In the same comment, COMM 247 states that “if there is so much criticism on the colonial language, I would opt for English as language of instruction.”²²²

Linked to this is the idea that people should express their love for Papiamentu, but that that does not mean that education in Papiamentu would be the key to success. For example COMM 246 states, using explicit capitalization:

I am totally PRO my Dushi²²³ Papiamentu and I will be the first to admit that I do NOT know how to write nor speak it correctly, just like as I think about 90 percent of our population ... Nothing against playful instruction until for example the third grade and from that point onwards continue with instruction in Dutch...²²⁴

²²¹ hopi plaka a wordu inverti den e introdukshon di papiamentu na Korsow. E resultado ta asina malu ku konsekuensha ku edukashon a bira MAS elitario. Skolnan priva na hulandes a sali manera paddestul !!

²²² Si tin tantu kritika riba e idioma kolonisado ami lo opta pa Ingles komo idioma di instrukshon

²²³ In this context, *Dushi* means both beloved and sweet. The capitalization of the first letter adds a feeling of recognition for the language.

²²⁴ Ami ta totalmente PRO mi Dushi Papiamentu y ta e prome cu ta bisabo cu mi NO sa skibi'e ni papí'e correctamente mane mi ta kere 90% di nos populacion Nada contra pa instrui e muchanan “spelenderwijze” te cu podise 3e klas y di eynan sigui cu instructie taal Hulandes ...

COMM 254 does not see the introduction of Papiamentu as language of instruction as a threat to children's success:

But not all children must *per se* go to study at Universities and higher education in the Netherlands. A child should not be disadvantaged because they did not grow up in a household where Dutch did not play much of a role. I was lucky enough to be able to speak Dutch at home and that made primary school easier for me, but that doesn't seem feasible for all children in Aruba?²²⁵

Not only the ideology behind the introduction of Papiamentu in schools is framed as political and nationalist, for some contributors the introduction will also have severe effects with regards to the future of democracy. COMM 259 envisions severe political consequences when Papiamentu is introduced as language of instruction: "If you change from Dutch to Papiamentu will degrade the intellectual level of our country, but it will also irrevocably bring Aruba into a dictatorship, maybe even communism. Our children will become successful plantation workers, but the government will be rich. Farewell intelligence, farewell democracy..."²²⁶

²²⁵ Pero no tur hende mester per se bay studia na un universidad/hogeschool na Hulanda. Un mucha no por wordo perhudica paso nan no a crece den un cas cu tin hopi influencia Hulandes aden.

Ami mes si tawata tin e suerte pa por papia hulandes na cas y esaki a haci scol basico mas facil, pero no ta factibel pa haci esaki pa tur mucha den tur cas na Aruba?

²²⁶ Cambiando di Hulandes pa Papiamentu, apart di baha e nivel intelectual di nos Pais, tambe lo encamina Aruba na un dictaduria sin retorno y cu lo por yega te na comunismo. Nos jiunan lo bira plantadonan exitoso, pero rikeza lo ta pa overheid.. Ayo inteligencia, ayo democracia...

COMM 247 repeats that “The introduction of Papiamentu in schools in Curaçao has turned out to be a disaster!! If you have problems using the colonial language ... choose for English!!”²²⁷ COMM 247 continues in a next contribution to add that “It is true that the mother tongue is the basis to learn other languages...but unfortunately we must admit that Papiamentu is a language that is developing. We are still poor in vocabulary for example.”²²⁸ COMM 38 replies to this and says “A country that chooses a ‘foreign language’ to teach the children in schools is . . . a colonized country (that uses the language of the colonizer.”²²⁹

6. The problem of the education system is not the language of instruction

As in the discussions about the start of the pilot schools in 2012, many participants in this discussion challenge whether the change of language of instruction would have any effect if there are so many other shortcomings in the education system, some even question whether there would be any problem with the language of instruction at all. For example COMM 243 wonders about the “secret of the Surinamese. Their Dutch is excellent. They are not even allowed to speak their mother tongue (*Sranantongu or whatever*)

²²⁷ Papiamentu na skol a resulta den un desaster na Korsow!! Si boso tin problema pa uza e idioma kolonisado....skohe pa Ingles!!

²²⁸ Bo idioma materno ta e base pabo sinja otro idioma...pero lamentablemente nos mstr admiti ku papiamentu ta un idioma ku ta desarojando. Nos ta pober ainda na por ehempel nos bokabulario

²²⁹ E situacion di e paisnan cu ta scoge un 'vreemde taal' pa educa su muchanan na scol ta . . . un pais colonisa (ta uza idioma di e colonisado)

on the playground.”²³⁰ COMM 248 makes clear that “language is not the problem, children party, drink, travel, use their school budget for luxury and stay behind in school!”²³¹

COMM 248 blames the parents for the lack of success of the children and calls for the parents to support the children. “Help the children. Find tutors and dedicate time to them ... nowadays fathers and mothers enter the schools to threaten the teachers or even beat the teachers”²³² Reminiscing on the past of education COMM 248 emphasizes the influence of the friars and sisters of the past on the first steps of emancipation of Papiamentu in education, and points out the discriminatory nature of Dutch only education, even invoking the fight by Betico Croes to liberate Arubans from discrimination:

Why has Betico struggled so fervently for our island?

He has lived through the discrimination.

That is why he became a teacher and a politician!

You are forgetting the history of the friars who are the ones that started the battle for the Papiamentu language with Trupialen²³³ and

²³⁰ e secreto di e Surnamenonan. Ta Hulandes ta asina uitmuntend. Nan no mag di papia nan lenga materna (Sranantongo or whatever) ni riba speelplaats.

²³¹ E idioma no ta e problema muchanan ta bai fiesta; bebe; travel; usa e placa di skol pa luho y ta keda tras den studie!

²³² Juda e mucha. Busca bij les y dedica tempo na dje..awor tata cu mama ta hasta drenta tereno di skol menasa of hasta bati juffrouw of meneer

²³³ A choir founded in 1953 by the friars

composed songs in Papiamento and started to allow Papiamento in the playground and supported local students to go and study in the Netherlands and become the local teachers to promote Papiamento in school!²³⁴

COMM 249 is also convinced that the problems of the education system are of a completely different order. “The level of education has (almost) no relation with the language of instruction. The level depends on the level of education at home (home situation) and the level of education of the educators (school situation).”²³⁵

COMM 242 responds to earlier defense of the reform by COMM 161 on the basis of personal experience:

... up until now VWO is very good. My son is in the fourth class v4, which is normal. By the way ... we are sixth generation Aruban (without mixing), and my son has the best report of his year again. Three years in a row (without counting primary school) he has been the best of his year. Just to be clear about this, it is an Aruban that has been the best

²³⁴ Pakiko Betico tawata lucha asina ferviente pa nos isla?

E la biba e descriminashon.

Pesey e la bira meneer di skol y politico!

Boso ta lubida historia cu e broeder nan mes a cuminsa lucha pa e idioma papiamento cu Trupialen y compone cantica na Papiamento y nan a cuminsa laga papiamento riba speelplaats y promove studiante lokaal pa bai studia Hulanda y bira asi asina meneer y juffrouw nan lokaal pa promove papiamento na skol!

²³⁵ E nivel di enseñanza no tin (kasi niun) relashon ku e idioma di instrukshon. E nivel ta depende di e nivel di enseñanza na kas (thuissituatie) i e nivel di e edukador na skol (schoolsituatie).

of class since year one ... and we speak Papiamentu at home. The difference may be that we are dedicated parents, and we are informed about everything!!!²³⁶

The discussion that ensues from this contribution is not about language but about purity of race and the importance of Indian blood as a proof of right to claim to be Aruban.

Argumentation in support of the project mainly centered on the following arguments:

1. If you are taught in your mother tongue, you are much more likely to be successful, including learning other languages

COMM 241 underscores that the Dutch language of education is a colonial remnant, that the reform is research based and that continuing the present system is continuing to put the children at a disadvantage:

Children that do not speak Dutch stay behind and that affects their future. This [multilingual education] is a method that is used in many countries, it has been researched by UNESCO and others and it has

²³⁶ ... vwo te ainda ta hopi bon. Mi yiu ta den v4 y tin 4 klas, cu ta normal. By the way ... nos ta Arubiano di 6 generacion naci aki (sin mescla), y mi yiu ta e beste di su jaarlaag pa e rapport aki atrobe. 3 año tras di otro (sin conta basisschool), cu e twt e miho alumno di su jaarlaag. No pa gaba, pero pa haci e cos aki duidelijk: ta un Arubiano ta e miho desde CB1 na Colegio... anto nos ta papia Papiamentu na cas. E diferencia ta, kisas, cu nos ta mayornan completamente dedica, y nos ta na haltura di cada cos!!!

positive results. The Dutch language disadvantages our children, international institutions are putting pressure on Aruba to come up with education, that is fit for its people. people it is time that we care about the future of our children. Do not forget that if children have problems with language, their minds do not develop the way they should. Inform yourselves!²³⁷

COMM 105 strongly disagrees and refers to the fact that “It is strange that children of strangers that come to Aruba are educated in a language that is not their mother tongue and still they graduate as the best in school.”²³⁸ The contributor recognizes the so-called “study done by UNESCO and its results”²³⁹ but disputes these results as “studies have been done about thousands of things and afterwards the consequences have turned out to be otherwise”²⁴⁰

As stated at the beginning of this analysis, the discussion is dominated by a few contributors, which allows insight in the construction of their arguments. After a lengthy exchange between COMM 100, 105, 161, 246 and 249, COMM 38 interjects and asks for argumentation for the maintenance of Dutch as

²³⁷ E muchanan cu no ta papia Hulandes ta keda atras y esaki ta afecta nan futuro. E ta un metodo cu hopi paisnan ta uza, e ta investiga entre otro pa UNESCO y e tin resultadonan positivo E idioma Hulandes ta perhudica nos muchanan, instancianan internacional ta presiona Aruba pa e bin in educacion, aplica na su hendenan. shonnan a bira tempo pa nos preocupa pa future di nos yiunan. No lubida cu si e mucha tin problema cu su idioma su mente no ta desaroya manera mester ta. Informa bo mes

²³⁸ Mas straño ta cu yiunan di stranhero ta bin Aruba, haya les den un idioma cu no ta nan idioma materno y asina mes hopi di nan ta slaag als beste van de school

²³⁹ e estudio haci dor di Unesco y e resultadonan di esaki.

²⁴⁰ Tin estudio haci riba miles di cos y despues a resulta di no ta asina

language of instruction, followed by an explanation about the timing of both the pilot as well as about the introduction. About the pilot COMM 38 states that “The project has been ongoing as a pilot for eight years now. What is a pilot?... right, a pilot runs first to check whether something needs to be adjusted. This is what we call evaluation. This has been done and the results have been published.”²⁴¹ About the timing of the introduction COMM 38 states: “in January the orientation phase starts. SML project will be introduced in Kindergarten in August 2019. There is no rush.”²⁴² COMM 159 is the first to answer to this: “you can do nothing with Papiamentu. All further schooling is based on Dutch. So work on that.”²⁴³ COMM 254 responds with a brief explanation about the value of the mother tongue in education and asks “why are you so obsessed by the Netherlands?”²⁴⁴ COMM 159 retorts “I will never accept that my children would be taught in Papiamentu. They want to do this because the children of foreigners have problems with Dutch. But that should not become our problem.”²⁴⁵ COMM 193 further emphasizes this: “Finally someone who dares to say what this is about. It is sad to see that people who had access to good studies want to take away opportunities of A population.

²⁴¹ E proyecto tin como 8 aña andando caba como pilot. Kico ta pilot? . . .juist, pilot ta drey prome pa controlu ktk y ahusta aki aya. Esaki yama evalua. Esaki tambe a sosode y a publica e resultadonan.

²⁴² January ta cuminsa cu fasr di orientacion. Y ta introduci e proyecto SML den kleuter na augustus 2019. No ta cuestion di hisa benta.

²⁴³ Bo no por hasi nada verder ku e papiamentu. E skolnan tur ku ta sigi despues di basis ta hulandes . Dus traha ariba esey.

²⁴⁴ dicon "staar bo mes blind" riba Hulanda?

²⁴⁵ Ami nunca lo asepta pa mi yiunan hanja les den papiamentu.

Nan kier hasi e kos ki pasobra ku tin hopi mucha stranhero tin problema ku e hulandes. Pero esey no mester bira nos problema

Like you said, we spoke Dutch at School and up until now we are proficient in it! The big problem is that many of the teachers do not speak Dutch.”²⁴⁶ “If all children that start in KINDERGARTEN are exposed to Dutch, that language becomes their language. That is how it was for us.”²⁴⁷ Also this contributor emphasizes to “agree that our language BELOVED PAPIAMENTO Enters school so that all who live her speak it as well as we do! AND BTW WE ONLY SPEAK PAPIAMENTO AT HOME!”²⁴⁸

COMM 244 emphasizes the value of mother tongue based education for the development of academic and societal success, underscoring that children should first be taught in their mother tongue before moving on to other languages of instruction and emphasizing that starting education in a foreign language at a young age disadvantages the children and perturbs their education career.

2. This project follows a research-based model

COMM 246 doubts the research-based character of the educational reform: “It saddens me VERY MUCH that I have not heard many positive reactions from

²⁴⁶ Porfin Un hende cu ta durf bisa cos manera e ta. Tristo pa wak con hende cu a haña tur chance di studia bon ta tribi di kita chance di Un pueblo! Manera bo ta bisa, nos a pp Hulandes na Scol y te awe nos ta domine! E problema grandi cu nos tin ta cu mucho juffrouw y meneernn no ta domina Hulandes.

²⁴⁷ Si tur mucha cu Drenta KLEUTER cuminsa tende Hulandes e idioma ey ta bira mescos cu nn idioma. Esey a pasa cu nos

²⁴⁸ Pero si mi ta Full di acuerdo pa nos idioma STIMA PAPIAMENTO Drenta scol pa tur cu ta biba aki alolargo domine mes bon cu nos! Y BTW NA MI CAS TA PAPIAMENTO SO NOS TWT PAPIA!

parents whose children have gone to the Skol Multilingual and now they want to impose on ALL our children and cousins to be instructed in the mother tongue! I can understand that some may think so, but let's be serious ... I believe that they first should research [...]”²⁴⁹ In response to this COMM 252 testifies that COMM 252's child “goes to the pilot school and it is very nice to be taught in the mother tongue which she speaks and understands and not in a foreign language like dutch.”²⁵⁰ which is immediately rejected by COMM 100 as an “isolated success”²⁵¹ that cannot be a basis for policy and furthermore “it is too early to claim success before the child completes primary education.”²⁵² COMM 253 adds to that a warning for the child: “wait until [your child] wants to enter HAVO/VWO or MAVO or even more when it prepares to go and study in the Netherlands. Then you will notice the consequences”²⁵³

COMM 241 is saddened by the negative comments to this post and exclaims: “It is with sadness that I read that you can do nothing with Papiamento, and therefore we should continue with Dutch, while knowing that that is not the language that our children hear. Inform yourselves more about languages and

²⁴⁹ Mi tin HOPI dolor na mi curazon paso mi no a tende muchu bon comentario di oudersnan cu nan jiunan ta bai skol multilingual..... Y awor nan kier pusha TUR nos jiu y nieto nan pa worde instrui den nan lenga materna! Mi por comprende cu algun por pensa cu ta un bon cos pero serio ... Mi ta kere nan mester bai research prome

²⁵⁰ chiquito ta bay un di e pilot skol aki y ta hopi mas dushi pa haña les den un idioma cu e ta papia y compronde di chiquito y no den un idioma extranjero manera hulandes.

²⁵¹ exito isola

²⁵² pa por bisa cu tin exito ta pa mas tempran ora e mucha ta cabando 6e klas

²⁵³ warda ora e kier drenta HAVO/VWO of MAVO of hera ora e tin cu cuminsa prepara pa bay studia na Hulanda. E ora lo ripara e consecuencia

the development of the child's mind."²⁵⁴ COMM 100 responds to that and states that "the mind of a little child is very malleable and they can learn different languages very quickly. I have the impression that this whole affair of Papiamento in school is something of a hidden agenda and if the minister is not careful it will end the same or even worse as minister Hooyboer whom was said to not even speak Dutch herself."

3. The current system is failing the children, so we should welcome change

COMM 161 supports the introduction of SAM and underscores that "That which we have now, clearly doesn't work!"²⁵⁵ which draws a reaction from COMM 246 who say that "it would be better to change for something better and not for something *ad hoc* that has to be introduced right now ... Are you serious that it doesn't work??? What background do ALL professionals in our country have???? Did it not work for them????"²⁵⁶ COMM 243 adds to the discussion, in English, "We'll have to try it, the current state of Aruban education isn't working anyway"

²⁵⁴ Ta un tristeza pa lesa, cu no por hasi nada cu Papiamento, pesey mester sigui cu Hulandes, sabiendo cu e no ta un idioma cu mayoria di nos muchanan ta scucha. Informa bo mes mas riba idioma y desaroyo di mente di mucha.

²⁵⁵ Loque nos tin awor ta duidelijk cu no ta sirbi!

²⁵⁶ pero lo ta mihor pa cambia pa algo "mihor" y no

Pa algo hasi "ad hoc" y cu mester hasi di biaha awor ... Na serio e no ta sirbi??? Que hubo di TUR e profesional nan cu tin riba nos pais???? E no a sirbi pa nan????

4. Neither Dutch nor Papiamentu are world languages, Dutch will not open the world to you.

In this Facebook discussion there is no attention to the geographical limitations of Dutch and Papiamentu. However, in several contributions, studying in English is offered as an alternative for both Papiamentu and Dutch as for COMM 243 who states that “The only option for further studies for our local children would be at an international university”²⁵⁷ as well as for COMM 247 who proposes to choose for English “More for the region, and sometimes students can study at the umpteenth university and HBO in the Netherlands that teaches in English nowadays, or in america or canada”²⁵⁸

Other reflections

COMM 249 responds to a reaction in which COMM 100 claims that the minister of education only “listens to those he wants to hear”²⁵⁹ instead of being “the voice of the voiceless”²⁶⁰. In his response, COMM 249 points out imperfections in COMM 100's Papiamentu to point out that they have not learned their own language well. Later on COMM 249 adds to “agree with Minister Lampe that Papiamentu should be introduced in schools. If, as a

²⁵⁷ E unico optie pa nos muchanan local lo ta verdere studie na un internacionale universiteit

²⁵⁸ Mas den regio, i a la bes studiante nan por studia na Hulanda na e tantisima Universidat i Hbo ku ta na Ingles awendia of bai merka/ canada

²⁵⁹ scucha solamente voz di esnan di cual e kier tende.

²⁶⁰ e voz di esnan cu no tin voz

country, you respect yourself, you have to speak your own language, which is something we are not successful at right now. However, I disagree with the way it is done. Long time ago Curacao has done the same, with disastrous consequences.”²⁶¹

COMM 246 reasons along the same lines and has many questions about practicalities and priorities. “How many teachers have the right training to teach in Papiamentu???? What will they do with those that speak Dutch at home and can not enter a school of SPCOA²⁶² or do not have the financial means to pay for private schools??? And I have so many more questions and doubts!”²⁶³ The post concludes in Dutch: “I fear the worst”²⁶⁴.

The discussion leads COMM 241, in favor of reform, to conclude “Why do we not want change for the better? A people that is against itself can not make progress.”²⁶⁵

²⁶¹ Mi ta di akuerdo ku minister Lampe ku mester introdusí papiamento na skol. Si komo país bo ta respetá bo mes, bo mester dominá bo mes idioma, loke aktualmente ta laga hopi di deseá. Sin embargo, mi no ta di akuerdo ku e manera. Hopi aña pasá Kòrsou a hasi e mesun kambio i esaki a resultá funesto.

²⁶² SPCOA is the Stichting Protestants Christelijk Onderwijs Aruba, at least one of their schools would be exempt from introducing education in Papiamentu as the majority of the parents would have indicated to speak Dutch at home.

²⁶³ Cuanto leraar tin cu tin e educacion necesario pa duna les na papiamento???? Kiko lo hasi cu esnan cu ta papia Hulandes na cas y no por drenta un skol di SPCOA of no tin e poder financiero pa drenta un skol priva??? Y asina tin hopi pregunta y duda mas!

²⁶⁴ Ik hou mijn hart vast!!!

²⁶⁵ Pa kiko nos no kier un cambio pa miho? Un pueblo cu ta contra su mes no por progresa.

In conclusion

This 2017 discussion on the introduction of Papiamentu as language of instruction in primary schools in Aruba demonstrates that the recognition of the value of Papiamentu as language of instruction for the Aruban primary schools is far from complete. Despite the reportedly successful implementation of the pilot schools since 2012, the beliefs about language and society that had so strongly influenced the lack of development of mother tongue based education in Aruba are still in place and are expressed openly. As we will see in the next section, the recurrence of these *topoi* persists throughout the discourse on language and education throughout the years, illustrating the tenacity of the colonial imprint on beliefs on language and society.

5.3.4 Social media: the unpolished public dialogue, recurring voices

The subdivision of the line of argumentation as presented in sections 5.3.2 and 5.3.3 can also be found in the other online Facebook discussions that were selected for this study. In this current section I will illustrate the recurrence of the topoi that were introduced in this chapter throughout the wider discussion on this topic on Facebook as a reconfirmation of the persistence of the beliefs that undermine the acceptance of the introduction of the home language as language of instruction.

This section will follow the same structure as sections 5.3.2 and 5.3.3, categorizing the reactions that reject or criticize the use of Papiamentu as language of instruction and the reactions that support the introduction in separate categories.

All quotes that are presented in this section are taken from Facebook discussions that touch upon the use of or the introduction of Papiamentu in education. The discussions focus on the introduction of the pilot project scol multilingual in 2012 (FB 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6), and the discussions on the introduction of Papiamentu as language of instruction as part of the Scol Multilingual in 2017 (FB 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23, 25 and 26). Other discussion touch upon the position of Papiamentu as language of instruction or as subject in secondary education (FB 7), an example of perceived linguistic injustice in a classroom (FB 8), political propaganda that refers to language and emancipation (FB 11), the language rights of those that do not speak

Papiamento at home (FB 12), a *share* of a newspaper clipping on the value of mother tongue education for educational success (FB 13) and a discussion on the content of the same newspaper clipping (FB 14) and the announcement that 2018 would be the “Year of Papiamento” (FB 24). FB 9, 10, 15 and 16 have not been included in this analysis due to insufficient direct relevance for the topics of this study.

1. It used to be better in the past... I went to school in Dutch, I was successful, so the system is successful

Some of the contributors to the Facebook discussions are convinced that something has gone wrong over the years as their personal experience seems to lead them to believe that things were better in the past. For example COMM 65 in FB4 (Sept 14, 2012) makes the point that “We have to go back to the old system, because today the children can write in Dutch but they can not have a conversation in Dutch!!!!”²⁶⁶ In the same discussion, COMM 68 seems to address this challenge by proposing to improve Dutch proficiency by forbidding the children to speak in Papiamento in schools: “it would be better if we would look for a way to improve Dutch. A good way would be to not

²⁶⁶ Nos mester bai bek na e systema bieuw, pasobra mi ta bisabo awendia e muchanan por scribi Ned pero nan no por hasi un conversacion na Ned!!!!

speak papiamento in class. that would count for lower and higher secondary."²⁶⁷

The author of FB 12 (March 22, 2017) also reflects on the proficiency in different languages when he responds to comments on the use of Papiamento in day to day practice in classrooms:

I believe you when you say that many teachers use Papiamento in class, but I remember an interview in which a young student indicated that his dutch proficiency was so insufficient that he could not follow university level education in the Netherlands, despite the fact that he had completed VWO. I have completed HBS²⁶⁸ where almost all teachers were dutch-european and I never experienced a big difference when I went to the Netherlands. My point is that if we decide to introduce papiamento then we have to do it right and create options for the use of other languages too.²⁶⁹

This author refers to a past when apparently schools prepared sufficiently for higher education in Dutch, in contrast to the present when students are worse

²⁶⁷ Miho cos ta pa nos busca un manera pa mehora e hullandes. Un bon manera ta pa no papa papiamento den klas. esey ta conta pa onderbouw i bovenbouw.

²⁶⁸ HBS: Hogere BurgerSchool, predecessor of VWO.

²⁶⁹ "mi ta kerebo cu hopi docente lo ta usa papiamento den klas, pero mi ta corda un entrevista cu Aldrick Croes a sostene cu un hoben estudiante cu a indica cu su hulandes tabata asina inferior cu e no por a sigui un estudio universitario na Hulanda aunke ela termina VWO. Ami a caba HBS na unda casi tur docente tabata hulandes-europeo y mi no a experiencia un diferencia grandi ora mi a bay Hulanda.

Mi punto ta cu si nos dicidi pa introduci papiamento anto ban hasie drechi y crea opcionan pa por sigui usa tambe otro lenga."

prepared and cautions that the introduction of Papiamentu should be planned and executed carefully, implicitly claiming that it should lead to results that match those of the imagined past when results would have been better.

Not every reference to personal experience leads to a rejection of the introduction of Papiamentu as language of instruction. In FB 4 (September 4, 2012) COMM 66 defends the introduction of Papiamentu as language of instruction, however, a new variety of the personal success story surfaces: the testimonial of a mother or father (COMM 66) about the daughter who was reportedly successful in primary and secondary education and who has now moved to the Netherlands for further studies. “When we arrived in Bonaire [from the Netherlands] I thought that I had to keep on speaking Dutch with my child however gentlemen thank God I came about in time and stopped that folley, I realized that it was better for my daughter to receive a solid basis which is Papiamentu so after that she could learn other languages well.”²⁷⁰. “Now the thing is that when the teacher asks how she has come to be so fluent in dutch she says that it is because her papiamentu was solid! So I believe that papiamentu must be brought to school and it must be solid and straightforward!”²⁷¹

²⁷⁰ “ora ku a jega Boneiro den mi kabes tbt ku ta hulandes mi jui tin ku sigi papia awel shonan no ta asina danki Dios ku mi a bin bei na tempo I stop di hasi koi loko dikon mi ta bisa asina , mi a bin ripara ku mihor mi jui sa su base bon ku ta papiamentu anto asina ey e por domina e otro nan bon.”

²⁷¹ Awo e kos ta bin boso sa kiko e maestronan ta puntre kon bin e por domina e idioma hulandes bon asina e ta bisa nan ku mi base ku ta papiamentu tbt solido! Dus ami si ta kere ku mester por hiba papiamentu skol solamente e mester ta solido I riba un linja!

Personal reflections on the past can also lead to nuanced reactions on a sense of missed opportunity: not glorifying the past as a better time when chances for success were higher but recognizing the failure of a system that only benefited a few and left out the majority. COMM 92 in FB 11 (March 21, 2017) reflects on personal history, and states “this makes me think, that when we were at the end of school.....unfortunately we knew nor papiamento nor other languages!”²⁷² FB 26 (December 18, 2017) includes such a reflection as COMM 297 makes it explicit that

I have heard an ex school mate (Aruban doctor) express against Papiamento in school as instructional language, stating that 'they made it' with Dutch as language of instruction. 'They' do not realize that 'they' represent a very small % of the Population (around 9%) who has achieved a high education! Many say that they have done 'fine'. But how many more could have said that they have done 'great'?

This draws further support from COMM 299: “COMM 297 indeed. I strongly believe many more Arubans would have accomplished much more if they understood the instructional Dutch better in school.” COMM 252 confirms this on the basis of personal experience: “I wish i had the opportunity to get my education in my native language and not in a foreign language... instead of moving forward I had to go backwards and try to understand how to add/

²⁷² "e ta hasi mi pensa, cu na fin di nos tempo di school.....ata nos no por ni papiamento corda otro idioma!"

substract/ multiply in a language that i didn't understand and I don't even use anymore...”

2. If you teach children in Papiamento, they will not be able to succeed in higher education

Throughout the years, this belief has been very strongly present in the public debate on the introduction of Papiamento in schools. Not all participants in the public discussion agree with this though. In response to post FB4, contributors warn that if you teach children in Papiamento, or not in Dutch, they will not be successful in further studies, and in this case reference is made to past failures in other island territories of the former Dutch Caribbean. COMM 68 for example makes the point that “In theory this may sound like a good idea, but in reality it isn’t. They have tried this system here in Curacao, and it did not work. In St Maarten there are schools in English, but anyhow you see that in Holland they do not speak Dutch.”²⁷³ COMM 67 disagrees with COMM 68 and contradicts the failure of Papiamentu schools in Curaçao – referring to the success of the *Skol Avansá Integrá Humanista (SKAIH)/Kolegio Erasmus* – “Btw @ COMM 68 there is the Erasmus School in Curaçao and it is fully in Papiamento and the children are doing well in the school and it is by no means a pilot project it is FULLY IN PAPIAMENTO...”²⁷⁴, not only emphasizing

²⁷³ Den theorie e ta sona un bon idea, pero den realidad no ta. Nan a purba e sistema aki na Curacao i e no a traha. Na St Maarten tin scol na ingles. pero toch mi ta mira cu na hullanda nan no por pp e hulandes.

²⁷⁴ Btw @ COMM 68 tin scol Erasmus na Corsou y e ta ful na Papiamento y e muchanan ta bay bon na scol e no ta manera scol piloto e ta FULL NA PAPIAMENTO...

the success of the use of Papiamentu as language of instruction in that school, but also emphasizing that it is not a pilot project, apparently, the pilot project status appears to decrease credibility of the PSML project. Apart from that, COMM 67 confirms that there have been failed projects by the government of Curaçao which indeed was not very successful in its first attempts to introduce Papiamentu in schools in the early years of this century²⁷⁵. However, later attempts (based on the implementation of educational reform through the *Lv Funderend Onderwijs*) gave a push to the structural introduction of Papiamentu in schools and stipulated that at the end of primary education, minimum levels of Dutch and Papiamentu proficiency should be the same.

And COMM 67 is supported by COMM 71 who, referring to the initial less successful projects in Curaçao, makes the point that Curaçao and Aruba can not be compared as

Here in Aruba it is not just about Papiamentu as language of instruction, the project is called “Proyecto Skol Multilingual” which includes four languages from the moment you start Kindergarten! It is just that classes are taught in Papiamentu but at the same time you learn Dutch, English and Spanish.. Imagine that in other countries, e.g. in Holland, they would start in the first year from the first class in

²⁷⁵ E scol piloto tawata ful un otro plan y e minister di e tempo ey a opta pa bin cu e scol piloto pa tene tur hende contento y p'esey e no ta dunando resultado paso' docentenan mes no kier duna les na Papiamentu, mayornan no kier pa nan yiu haya les na Papiamentu

Chinese. You need to know your own language in order to be able to learn another one..²⁷⁶

But not everybody agrees with COMM 67 and COMM 71, COMM 69 testifies about her own struggle with Dutch in the Netherlands, but believes that that struggle would only become worse for her daughter if she gets Papiamentu in school:

Well I started studying in holland 9 years ago speaking papiamentu and english at home and I had Dutch in school. When I arrived in holland thinking that my dutch was sufficient I have struggled with dutch during all of my studies and I believe that many go to the same struggle. Now how is that for the children that have papiamentu at school???? I have chosen to teach my three year old dutch first and believe my child teaches me words in dutch that I who have lived in holland for 9 years do not know!!!!²⁷⁷

²⁷⁶ No por compara Curacao cu Aruba, e manera cu nan a opta pa introducie no twt e manera corecto.. Aki na Aruba eno ta djis bai pa e Papiamentu als instructietaal, e proyecto jama "Proyecto Skol Multilingual" cual ta encera tur 4 idioma fe ora bo cumsa kleuter skol! Djis cu les ta wordo duna na Papiamentu pero dimes bo lo sinja Hulandes, Ingles y Spanjo.. Imaginabo na otro paisnan p.e. Na Hulanda mes nan cumsa 1ste anto hanja fe prome dia les na Chineses.. Bo mester por sa bo mesun idioma pa por sinja un otro..

²⁷⁷ Wel ami a bin studia na hulanda 9 anja pasa papaindo paipiamto y ingles na cas y ma hanja hulandes na scol. Ora ma jega hulanda keriendo cu mi hulandes ta riba nivel ma struggle durrante ful mi estudio cu e hulandes y kere mi tin hopi mas ta pasa mescos. Awo kiko ta para di e muchanan cu ta hanja papiamentu na scol???? Ami a kies pa sinja mi yiu di 3 anja hulandes prome anto keremi mi yiu ta in sinja mi palabranan na hulandes cu ni ami cu tin 9 anja ta biba na hulanda sa!!!!

Recognizing the struggle as well as the struggle of others, COMM 69 does not see the solution in a shift to Papiamentu as language of instruction, but in radically choosing to raise her own child in Dutch.

AUTH 1 was very explicit in his positioning towards the introduction of Papiamentu as language of instruction in the pilot schools in 2012. In FB 5 (September 14, 2012) he expresses confusion on the perceived lack of coherence in the educational reform plan:

I ain't sayin' NOTHIN'!!

Should I Laugh or Cry for this lack of Communication between the top guys in our education system.? One side ye want to push Papiamentu on Children from Kindergarten to the 4th grade as Instruction Language (when children are more susceptible to pickin' up a Language) then now when ye reach Boven bouw the same System want to Patch up on ye Dutch because it poor.? I can't wait to tag some people on this.!!

COMM 42 responds to this, stating that “onderbouw teachers don't want to see it, and they won't see it nor understand it as they do not want to.”²⁷⁸ He goes on to add arguments that implicitly promote the use of Dutch in education as in “bovenbouw”, the last years of secondary education, the exams come from the Netherlands and he on a cynical note that “if children go to study in the Netherlands they will for sure have classes in Papiamentu, not

²⁷⁸ "onderbouw teachers don't want to see it. I nan no lo bai wak e tampoko ni kompronde paso nan no kier"

in Dutch”²⁷⁹. COMM 72 adds to this “[...] what you don't want to see, you don't hear neither.” and COMM 73 urges AUTH 1 to accept this change as a twist of fate: “Laugh. Crying won't help either.”

The discussion in FB 7 (April 25, 2015) focuses yet again on the position of languages in education and the quality of education. With reference to Papiamento, COMM 80 states that “Even if it is the mother tongue, it is limited to the (colloquial of) the ABC islands. Language proficiency is mainly a condition for higher success ratios in further studies (in Dutch, English, Spanish).”²⁸⁰ The (limited) geographical spread of the language appears to outweigh its potential role as language of instruction in education.

The gap between secondary and higher education and the role of the language of instruction in that gap is a concern for many. COMM 264 (FB 23, December 14, 2017) comments – in Dutch - on the nature of the ministerial decision on the reform and emphasizes that “This will further worsen the quality of secondary education on the island and will not make it easy for the children to enter secondary education and later higher vocational and university education abroad in the future. Insufficient language proficiency of pupils has been a problem for decades and this will only make the gap bigger.”²⁸¹ COMM

²⁷⁹ mi ta hopi sigur ku nan ta hanja les na papiamento i no hulandes.

²⁸⁰ Ook al is het de moedertaal is het beperkt tot de (spreektaal van) de ABC eilanden. Taalbeheersing is voornamelijk een randvoorwaarde voor een grotere slagingskans van de verdere studie (in het NL, ENG, SPA).

²⁸¹ Dit zal leiden tot een verslechtering van de kwaliteit van het Algemeen School Onderwijs op het eiland en zal de aansluiting en het toetreden voor studenten naar het voortgezet

...

197, 266 and 268 appear to agree but COMM 265 responds that “The 5 year pilot project points in the opposite direction.”²⁸² COMM 264 responds: “You don’t fool me look at the results of repeaters and those that fail over the past years This number has strongly increased”²⁸³ COMM 268 asks “If our schools will be only in Papiamento ... can you tell me where will the children go to study afterwards ???? As even now they have problems with Dutch 🗣️🤔🗣️🤔🗣️🤔🗣️🤔”²⁸⁴ COMM 184 responds to this “in america, Canada in the region... it is not only holland that has a university. Many renowned universities in the Netherlands have gone over to english as that is a more universal language.”²⁸⁵ COMM 208 is also concerned about the potential for further studies as “how will these children deal with Dutch afterwards, either in Aruba itself or when they go and study abroad!!”²⁸⁶

Part of the discussion in FB 26 (2017, December 18) further illustrates the perceived tension between the introduction of Papiamento as language of instruction and the potential for further studies: COMM 302 refers to personal

onderwijs en later naar HBO en Universiteit in het buitenland niet gemakkelijk maken in de toekomst Het niet voldoende beheersen van een taal vormt nu al jaren onder scholieren een groot probleem en dit maakt de kloof alleen maar nog groter

²⁸² Uit het 5 jaar durende pilot blijkt toch echt het tegendeel.

²⁸³ Dat maak je mij niet wijs kijk naar de resultaten van zitten blijvers en niet geslaagden van de afgelopen jaren Dit getal is sterk toegenomen

²⁸⁴ Si duna nos educashon na Papiamento so ...por bisa mi na unda nos joven nan por bai sigi nan educashon despues ???? Ku awo mes nan tin problema ku Hulandes 🗣️🤔🗣️🤔🗣️🤔🗣️🤔

²⁸⁵ na merca, canada , den regio... no ta hulanda so tin universidad. by the hopi universidad renoba na hulanda a bay over na inglis paso e ta un idioma mas universal

²⁸⁶ Con cu bai bin e muchanan lo tin di deal cu e hulandes despues, sea ta na Aruba mes of ora di bai studia afo!!

experience: “I never had a problem with the Dutch Language of instruction... how the Hell are you going to pursue higher education in holland if you substitute papiamento for dutch as language of instruction??” Later on COMM 302 interjects “Those who are struggling with the Dutch language will be worse off if you introduce papiamento as a language of instruction..”

3. Papiamento is an incomplete language that is not fit for academic use, is not international

In the discussions throughout the years, many voices are heard that question the status of Papiamento, its potential and the potential for the users of the language. In those discussions it appears to be acceptable to refer to Papiamento as incomplete or “not real”. For example COMM 76 comments in FB 7: “They will not get far in higher education on the Netherlands with Papiamentu. It is a dialect and not a language”²⁸⁷ In FB 4 COMM 37, questions the value of Papiamento, first of all by putting the word language between parentheses, and second by emphasizing that the language would only have a few speakers “I agree a "language" that is spoken by a handful of people has no place in our education system...”. In the same discussion, this contributor makes the point that “Dutch like it or not is the path to success”, implying that Papiamento is not, as there apparently is only one path to success. COMM 37 goes on and reproaches propagators of the introduction of the PSML project or Papiamento as language of instruction of having a mentality from which

²⁸⁷ met het Papiaments komen ze niet ver met het voortgezet onderwijs in Nederland. Het is een dialect en geen taal

they need to evolve “...forget this mentality that it is the Colonizer language...that was eons ago...we need to evolve and we are lucky to have the tools to succeed CHOSE THE BEST”. Dutch in this case apparently is the best tool, implicitly at the expense of the speakers of Papiamentu.

COMM 95 adds in FB 11 (March 21, 2017) “It has to be in dutch or in englis. For studies abroad papiamento will not help and creates problems. Nothing against papuamento as elective, but our island is very small”²⁸⁸ This is echoed In FB 12 (March 22, 2017), where COMM 9 can not take the decision of the introduction of Papiamentu in primary schools seriously, as “Papiamento is an incomplete language that misses many words”. As proof, eight loanwords are listed, four of which are Dutch words used in education, one comes from Spanish and one is a loanword that has come from French through Dutch²⁸⁹.

FB 26 (December 18, 2017) contains a series of explicit utterances of recognition for the value of Papiamentu for emancipation and education. However, COMM 301, a primary school teacher, explicitly follows up on that and emphasizes that Papiamentu would be incomplete: “In my personal opinion the language is not ready. There are not enough words to express feelings, emotion and opinion s I personally believe. So a lot of the communications goes non verbal. Good for socializing not so good for education.” The remark is ignored by the other participants in this discussion,

²⁸⁸ "E mester ta na hulandes of englis. Pa sigi studia despues afo papiamento no ta juda y ta trese un problema. Nada contra papuamento como keuze vak, pero e isla ta mucho chikito"

²⁸⁹ Bira serio. Papiamento falta hopi palabra. Mesa stoof dak Plafond lessenaar potlood pen schrift etc

but the fact that this is so explicitly stated and not countered reflects the acceptance of this perspective on the Papiamentu language. Sometimes, however, negative comments about Papiamentu are not left unanswered, as in for example COMM 228 who reproaches COMM 329 in FB 27: “Ms. COMM 329! Your way of expressing yourself is not exemplary of Aruban citizens. I feel like you unnecessarily lower our language to the level of a lingua franca. That is no reflection of patriotic love.”²⁹⁰

4. Dutch is the language of the law and of administration, so we can not change the language of instruction

The position that Dutch is the (traditional) language of law and administration, or of course is the language that is representative for the Kingdom of the Netherlands, keeps recurring. In FB 4 (September 14, 2012) COMM 37 grounds his defense of Dutch as the language of instruction in schools in the institutional character of Dutch as the language of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the language of the passport of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, which is the same passport for citizens of Aruba, Curaçao, The Netherlands and St Maarten:

the reality is that Aruba has to evolve and accept who we are ...a
constituent part of THE KINGDOM OF THE NETHERLANDS ...NOT READ

²⁹⁰ Sra. COMM 329! Bo forma di expresa no ta un ehemplo pa ciudadanonan di Aruba. Mi ta di opinion qu bo rebaha nos idioma na un lingua franca innecesariamente. E no ta refleha un amor patrio!

THE KINGDOM OF ARUBA..People grow up last time I checked my passport it said KONINKRIJK DER NEDERLANDEN OF WHICH ARUBA IS A PART. .BY THE WAY I HAVE BOTH USA AND DUTCH...GUESS WHAT OUTSIDE OF THE USA MY DUTCH PASSPORT IS MORE HIGHLY RESPECTED OVER THE USA..

The choice of words, calling for Aruba to evolve and accept, people to grow up, as well as the use of capitals clearly demonstrates deep felt emotion or agitation. The contribution is concluded with a remark about the perceived respect for the Dutch passport over the US passport, implicitly cautioning the promoters of Papiamento language rights to respect the Dutch language as symbol of the Dutch passport.

Another institutional approach is that the exams are in Dutch, and if the exams are in Dutch, you can or should not teach in another language. The author post FB 4 states that

If the exams would be done in Papiamento, then I would say, GREAT, come with a strong second and third language to reinforce the language skills of our children BECAUSE THEY HEAR PAPIAMENTO ON THE RADIO, TELEVISION, NEWSPAPER AND READ IT ALL AROUND THEM, RIGHT? Meaning that outside of school they will be influenced by that language in which they are going to do exam finally.

But that is NOT THE CASE. The little Dutch that children get is at school and on Google.nl Which also often translates their project things from English to Dutch. So if you limit the children just at the time when they

are in their most language receptive phase, teaching Papiamentu from Kindergarten till 4th grade. I STILL DON'T GET IT, Sorry!!²⁹¹

From another perspective, COMM 67 reflects on the way in which education in Dutch has become established in Aruba, according to COMM 67 at the expense of education in Papiamentu that was reportedly used as language of instruction in the catholic schools at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century. Despite the historical inaccuracy that slavery would still have existed up to the 1920s – the refinery in Curaçao opened its doors in 1918 - the contribution is of great value to understanding the symbolic value of Papiamentu as resistance to oppression, and Dutch as symbol for that oppression:

The problem lies in the time when Shell went to Curaçao and the Dutch arrived and said that they were going to help the education of Aua [Aruba], Bon [Bonaire] and Cur [Curaçao] with materials etc etc but they have imposed that DUTCH would become the language of instruction in all three islands, while on all three islands there were

²⁹¹ Si e examennan tbt wordo afgelegd na Papiamentu, anto e ora ey lo mi bisa, GREAT, bin cu tweede y derde taal mes pa amplia e mucha su conocimiento di idioma PASO TOCH E TA TENDE PAPIAMENTO NA RADIO, NA TELEVISION, DEN CORANTNAN MAS LESA Y FULL ROND DI DJE. Es decir cu pafo di scol toch e ta wordo influencia cu e Idioma cu e lo hasi su examen den dje finalmente.

Pero esey NO TA E CASO. E tiki Hulandes cu muchanan ta hanja ta na scol y riba Google.nl Cual tambe hopi biaha ta vertaal nan vertaal cos di Ingles pa Hulandes pa nan projectonan. Dus bo ta limita e mucha net den su anjanan cu e ta absorba Idioma mihor den su bida, dunando e Papiamentu di Kleuter te 4de klas. AINDA MI NO TA GET IT, Sorry!!

schools for the slaves... and these schools in those days were in PAPIAMENTO.²⁹²

COMM 92 also emphasizes the importance of the maintenance of Dutch as a language of instruction in FB 7 (April 25, 2015): “Papiamento and Dutch compulsory, and if it were up to me, Spanish too, at least if you want to be meaningful in the region. That last bit has always been kept at bay, to protect the bond with the Netherlands, pure politics but for the economy of the island Spanish is very important.”²⁹³

COMM 100 is clearly not in favor of Papiamento as language of instruction and emphasizes the normality of the former colonizers’ language as legal language in FB 12 (March 22, 2017):

All legal languages in the countries of (North and South) America are the former colonizers language. From Alaska up to Argentina. Some of these countries have other recognized languages though. Maybe Haiti and Paraguay are exceptions. Chinese and French that want to make an

²⁹² E problema ta sinta tempo cu Shell a bay Corsou anto e Hulandesnan a yega y bisa cu nan lo yuda e enseñansa di Aua, Bon y Cur cu material etc etc pero nan a impone cu e HULANDES mester bira idioma di instruccion na tur 3 isla, mientras cu ya tur 3 isla twt tin scol caba pa e catibonan por a educa nan mes... y scol e tempo ey twt na PAPIAMENTO.

²⁹³ Papiamento en Nederlands verplicht en als het aan mij ligt ook Spaans, als je tenminste iets wilt betekenen in de regio. Dat laatste is altijd afgehouden om de band met NL te beschermen, puur politiek maar voor de economie van het eiland is Spaans heel belangrijk

impression speak English. It would be better to teach in Esperanto, a language with an easy grammar.²⁹⁴

In FB 13 (March 29, 2017), COMM 117 makes the point, in Papiamentu, that if you want to use Papiamentu for all purposes, you should leave the Kingdom of the Netherlands. “I do not understand what this has to do with colonization. I think more with being part of the Kingdom and with our passport. And also with the fact that the language in Trias Politica is Dutch. If you say A, you should say B. Get out of the Kingdom and everything can be in Papiamentu.”²⁹⁵

In the same discussion, some contributors propose that English should be the preferred language of instruction, rather than Dutch or Papiamentu. COMM 116 questions the logic behind that as the language of the law is Dutch: “English??.... You forget that we are part of the Kingdom.... as such we have laws and for example codification based upon and similar to those of the Netherlands. The study of law is in Dutch....So you want that no more people study law??”²⁹⁶ Changing the language of instruction would not only challenge

²⁹⁴ Tur e paisnan di America (Noord en Zuid) tin como nan idioma official den cual nan leyman ta wordo formula e idioma di nan ex colonisador. Alaska te Argentina. Varios di e paisnan tin wel idiomanan reconoci pero esey ta tur. Excepcion kizas ta Haiti y Paraguay. Chinesnan y Francesnan cu kier haci benta grandi ta papia Ingles. Mihor bay duna les den Esperanto, un idioma cu gramatica basta facil.

²⁹⁵ Mi no ta comprende kiko e tin di haber cu colonialisacion. Sigun mi más cu partí di Reino y nos paspoort. Y tambe cu nos idioma den Trias Politica ta Hulandes. Bisa A bisa B tambe. Salí foy Reino y tur cos den Papiamentu

²⁹⁶ Ingles??....Bo ta lubida cu nos ta parti di Koninkrijk....como tal nos leyman por ehempel y codificatie ta basa y similar na esun di Hulanda. Estudio di Ley dus ta na Hulandes....dus bo kiermen cu niun hende mas por bai studia Ley tampoco??

the cohesion of the Kingdom, but would form such an obstacle that students would no longer be able to study law

Finally, later on in December 2017, COMM 303 adds in FB 26 that:

Children are like sponges, we shouldn't limit what they can learn. I grew up speaking English at home, Dutch at school and Papiamentu everywhere else. I agree we should be taught proper Papiamentu, since it is part of our heritage, but our laws and textbooks are in Dutch, and as an Aruban if there is one thing I am THE most proud of, is being able to have more than a working knowledge in all of these languages.

This recurrence of the continued tension between recognition of Papiamentu as the heritage language and Dutch as the language of administration, law and education, is reflected in many of the discussions on the introduction of Papiamentu as language of instruction.

5. Introduction of Papiamentu in education is a nationalist/ideological/... project - at the expense of the children's future

In many of the discussion, the introduction of Papiamentu as language of instruction is depicted as an ideological effort that will negatively affect the children's future. The introduction is framed as being based on nationalist, political or other ideological grounds. For example COMM 58 (FB 2, August 18, 2012) does not agree with the implementation of the pilot project: "I do not see the advantage of using Papiamentu at school. The majority of our children

fail in the Netherlands as both their written and oral proficiency are terrible. So what would be the added value of introducing Papiamentu at school, probably another political stunt of a small group.”²⁹⁷ This is an observation that reflects that one should not teach in Papiamentu in primary education because Aruban students are not successful in the Netherlands because of their lack of proficiency in Dutch. Not only does this contributor see no added value in introducing Papiamentu in school, furthermore, she sees it as a political stunt from a small group, implying that this project will not be likely to get a lot of support. COMM 23 reacts sharply to that as COMM 58 should “first look for information on what this project is about before giving it a political taste.”²⁹⁸ Framing the introduction of Papiamentu in schools as part of a political agenda for sovereignty or nationalism is a strategy that keeps coming back over time.

In FB 4 (September 14, 2012) AUTH 1 explicitly states that the introduction of Papiamentu as language of instruction would actually be exclusive, stating that the system that will be introduced will “For sure leave those children BEHIND whose home language is English, Spanish or Kréol.”²⁹⁹ As such it would not serve the whole community, but only those that are Papiamentu speakers. COMM 65 builds upon this observation and ridicules the PSML project,

²⁹⁷ ami no ta wak e voordeel di pone papiamentu na scol. Mayoria di nos hobennan akinan na hulanda ta score onder de maat paso zowel nan schrijfvaardigheid como nan spreekvaardigheid ta malisimo. Dus kiko ta e toegevoegde waarde di introduci papiamentu na scol, waarschijnlijk otro politieke stunt di un grupito.

²⁹⁸ @COMM 58...busca informacion prome di kiko e proyecto aki ta encera prome cu dun'e un smaak politico.

²⁹⁹ Por cierto lagando muchanan cu nan idioma na cas ta Ingles, Spanjo of Creole AFO

claiming that “the only thing that Aruba would have to do is bring all universities to Aruba and keep on pushing Papiamentu as it will only be [in Aruba] that we could work when we finish university that teaches papiamentu as mother language.”³⁰⁰

In FB 7 (April 25, 2015) COMM 80 seems to be supportive of the introduction of Papiamentu as a language of instruction but frames it as something that should be offered to those that believe in it: “The option of the papiamentu primary and secondary school should be offered on the island for those that believe in it (skol humanista).”³⁰¹ As such, this contribution actually recognizes and emphasizes the ideological nature of argumentation on language and emancipation.

The perceived ideological nature of the debate is further underscored in FB 12 (March 22, 2017). The post receives some strong reactions that have a nationalistic tendency, including e.g. COMM 110 who states: “Do not adapt to any other population groups. If there are people in Aruba that want another language, let them open their own school.”³⁰² Or COMM 111: “Those who want to live here and make money over herein Aruba have the DUTY to learn

³⁰⁰ Porfin un hende ta pensa mescos cumi!!!! E ned taal ta bajendo atras dia pa dia. No tumami na malo, pero nos mester sinja nos muchanan papiamentu, pero no di e manera cu e skol nan ta pretende. Well e unico cos cu Aruba tinco hasi ta trece tur e universidad nan na Aruba i sigi pusha papiamentu toch ta akinan so nos por traha ora nos caba cu universidad cu ta duna papiamentu como moeder taal.

³⁰¹ Op het eiland wel de optie papiamentstalige basisschool/middelbare school blijven aanbieden voor degenen die daarin geloven (skol humanista).

³⁰² “No mester adapta na ningun otro grupo di hende. Na Aruba hende ta y esun cu kier otro idioma nan habri nan mes un skol.”

our language to *or else go back from where you came*, it's that simple!!!!!!"³⁰³
COMM 112: "[...] You have to adapt to our system or *get lost*."³⁰⁴

In the same post FB 12 COMM 100 is also of the opinion that there might be a smaller group that would benefit from the introduction of Papiamentu in education, not the children in schools, but those who produce the books:

In Surinam, the language of instruction is DUTCH. How many of the top LAGO³⁰⁵ - Americans could speak Papiamentu? A very low percentage, probably less than 10%. My impression is (maybe wrong) that there are people who want to write books in Papiamentu that afterwards want to force the government schools to buy these. *Money talks*.³⁰⁶

Following these reactions in FB 12, a number of contributions that question linguistic rights along the lines of: should you expect to speak your own language if you go and live abroad? Is Papiamentu not *the* language of Aruba, so in Aruba, you would have to speak Papiamentu. This opinion is shared by multiple participants in this discussion, obvious, as the author of the post calls for a reflection on inclusivity: COMM 98: "if you go and live in another country

³⁰³ "Esnan cu kier biba aki y gana nan pan di cada dia na Aruba tin e DEBER di sinja nos idioma tambe or else go back from where you came, asi de facil!!!!!!!"

³⁰⁴ "Bo mester adapta bo mes na nos systema of get lost."

³⁰⁵ The former Aruban oil refinery in San Nicolas.

³⁰⁶ "Na Suriname e lenguahe cu ta usa na scool ta HULANDES. Cuanto di e mericanonan top di LAGO tabata por papia Papiamentu. Un percentahe masha abao, kizas por dune cu 1 cifra so. Mi impression ta (kizas robéz) cu tin personanan cu kier scirbi bukinan na Papiamentu pa despues forza via gobierno scoolnan pa cumpra nan. Money talks."

you have to adapt yourself to them as they will not adapt to you."³⁰⁷ COMM 99 adds an example "I have a friend that has gone to live in France, do you think that she can keep speaking papiamento over there and expect them to introduce the language over there? For real? You will speak the language of the country !!!!"³⁰⁸ COMM 101: "Just like when we go to another country we need to speak their language. If they come to our country, they have to speak and learn our language. Simple as that."³⁰⁹ COMM 107 aims a direct attack towards Latin-American immigrants:

If a person goes to a Latin country one has to be able to speak the language of that country or you can forget service. It is good to be proficient in several languages but why should Aruba use another country's language? Would there be a plan to become a spanish colony? English, Spanish, German or French as electives from which students should choose two is ok, and that want to impose their culture RETURN OR GO BACK TO THEIR COUNTRY. They have come her because Aruba is a tranquil place and to live like the bible taught us.³¹⁰

³⁰⁷ "ora bo bay biba na un otro pais abo mester adapta na nan paso nan no ta bay adapta nan mes pa bo"

³⁰⁸ Mi tin un amiga a bay biba na Francia, bo ta kere aya bow e por a keda papia papiamento y expect nan introduci e idioma ey pe aya bow? No toch? Abo bay papia e idioma di e pais !!!!

³⁰⁹ "Mescos cu ora nos bai otro país nos tin cu papia nan idioma. Ora nan bin nos país nan mester papia y siña nos idioma. Simple as that."

³¹⁰ "Si in persona bai in pais Latina mester por papia e pais ey su idioma sino lubida servicion. Ta bon pa por domina varios idioma pero pakico Aruba mester bai over na adapta otro país su idioma? Por ta tin plan pa bira un spaanse colony. Engles, Spaans, Duits y Frans como in

...

COMM 100 further argues that as Arubans will go abroad anyway, they should be taught and learn in Dutch. The US and Canada are not as welcoming as the EU and the Netherlands, so the language of instruction should be the language of the future host, and as such, Dutch: "If you go and study in the Netherlands, the whole EU is open for you to find work without the fear that the US or Canada give. If the thought is to study in Germany, teach German, if it is France, teach French."³¹¹

FB 23 was posted by AUTH 18, a digital media channel and newspaper AweMainta, and contains the text of an earlier post by Aruba parliamentarian AUTH 14, Daphne Lejuez. The newspaper presents the full text of Daphne Lejuez' earlier Facebook post as news without substantially adding to this. The text of the parliamentarian's comments can be found in FB 18. However, there are 9 shares, 55 comments and 61 emoticons. Part of the comments mainly focus on the political side of the decision to introduce the skol multilingual rather than on the educational and developmental side of it. COMM 31 also contributes to the discussion with a – lengthy – explanation of the foundational principles and plans of the introduction of the reform. COMM 31 concludes that the reform

vak pa e alumno skohe dos ta na su ordu y esun ku ta hanja ku nan tin ku impone nan cultura REGRESA OF BAI NAN PAIS BEK. Nan a bini aki paso bra Aruba ta in lugar trankil y por biba manera e bijbel ta sinja."

³¹¹ "Si bay sinja na Hulanda henter EU ta habri pa busca un trabao sin e miedo di USA o Canada. Si ta pensa pa sinja na Alemania sinja aleman si ta Francia sinja frances.

complies with a solid scientific basis that builds on pedagogic, didactic, linguistic, social, emotional, moral, cultural, civic arguments and that, on the contrary, there are no arguments to maintain a monolingual program based on a foreign language in our primary schools in Aruba. The fact that the majority of the schools in Aruba silently maintains Dutch as language of instruction, conflicts with human rights and deprives the majority of our children of equal and just access to quality education.³¹²

In the same post, COMM 271 warns that “This will heavily disadvantage our students for the future!”³¹³, further supported by COMM 272 who pleads “please tell this minister to get his head straight, this can not be, even now when our children arrive in the Netherlands they have problems with Dutch, so forget it!!”³¹⁴

³¹² ta cumpli cu base científico solido cu ta basa riba argumentonan pedagógico, didáctico, lingüístico, social, emocional, moral, cultural, cívico y cu, al contrario, no tin ningun base científico pa mantene un programa monolingual basa riba idioma stranhero den nos scolnan básico na Aruba; cu otro palabra: e echo cu den mayoría scol na Aruba keto bay ta mantene Hulandes como idioma di instrucción, ta bay contra derechonan humano y ta depriva e gran mayoría di nos muchanan di e chens igual y husto pa haya un enseñansa di calidad.

³¹³ Lo perjudica nos students nan masha hopi pa nan futuro!

³¹⁴ Please bisa e minister ey, dreecha su cabes, e cos aki no por, awo mes ora e studiantenan jega hulanda nan ta hanja problema cu e hulandes dus forget it!!

6. The problem of the education system is not the language of instruction

In many of the discussions on the language of instruction, contributors make a point of the fact that the language of instruction is not the main issue in education, or not even an issue at all, as COMM 116 (FB 13 March 22, 2017) points out:

Many children that stay behind in primary schools do so because of other motives that hinder them in their studies in general or in their capacity to study. That is something different. A child in normal circumstances ... the younger they are, the more apt they are to learn other languages and be proficient in those. That is how it should be. And it remains a fact that we are a small island and we must be able to prepare our children, as of a young age, to form part of the world, and not of our island alone.....³¹⁵

COMM 117 blames the involvement of parents and the afterschool care: "One should better point out the ones responsible. I am of the opinion that parents should be more involved in the education of their children and that

³¹⁵ Hopi muchanan cu ta keda atras den basisschool ta pa otro motibonan cu ta strobanan por lo general den nan estudio of nan capacidad pa studia. Esey ta algo otro. Un mucha over het algemeen den sircumstancianan normaal...mas jong e ta, mas capacidad e tin pa sinja y domina diferente idioma. Esey ta comproba. Y ta keda un fact cu nos ta un isla chikito y mester por prepara nos muchanan fey chikito pa por forma parti di e mundo aki y no di e isla aki so.....

afterschool care should be professionalized."³¹⁶ COMM 121 agrees with this and states that parent involvement is key and should be stimulated, but "Do not only focus on languages, although it is true that it plays a role too."³¹⁷ Another point identified by COMM 121 is that "the teacher's proficiency in Dutch also plays a role and currently deserves much more attention"³¹⁸ Later on COMM 117 adds that the "mother-tongue of Latino children is not Papiamentu but Spanish. And they have to deal with 3 language and as far as I understand still are the best of the class. And that is based in discipline."³¹⁹ The parents are also blamed for not sufficiently investing in Dutch and speaking Dutch with their children. In the same discussion, COMM 9 states that Latin American and Chinese parents invest in additional Dutch language training for their children, something that Aruban parents would not do, as well as parents that speak Dutch with their children and invest in language learning materials. Aruban parents would not be setting the right priorities³²⁰.

³¹⁶ Miho busca e culpa unda e ta. Ami kier pa mayornan ta más involvi den e estudio di nan juinan y pa naschoolse opvang wordo profesionalisa

³¹⁷ No benta tur cos riba e idioma, aunque berdad e ta hunga un rol.

³¹⁸ E nivel di e Hulandes di e maestronan tambe ta hunga un rol y asta den e situacion actual, merece hopi mas atencion

³¹⁹ e mother -tongue di muchanan latino no ta Papiamentu pero Spanjo. Y nan mester deal cu 3 idioma y toch ta salí e miho nan mane mi ta comprende. Y esey tin di haber cu disciplina

³²⁰ No e juinan di Latino cu ultimo I chines nan cu mas ta cabando VVO/HAVO ta pasobra e prioridad di e mayor nan pa inverti den hulandes pa nan juinan. E latinonan/chines nan ta paga school idioma of bijles hulandes pa nan juinan I loke nos como arubiano nunca ta hasi. Prefera den carnival iPhone ballets etc I no den su idioma cu e tin falta di dje pa su futuro. Pesei juinan latino/chines I de schakkel ta mihor alumnonan I e mayor nan cu ta Papia hulandes cu nan juinan. Esei tambe ta algo hopi bon. I tin programa riba cd pa Sinja idioma.

...

COMM 127 also believes that the introduction of Papiamentu as language of instruction is not well grounded and believes that more investment should go to the language proficiency of teachers "If currently the level of Dutch in school is so poor, what will it become if the classes are in Papiamentu? In the Netherlands many studies are in Dutch or English. Leave education as it is and invest more money in the Dutch or English proficiency of the teachers".³²¹

Finally COMM 9 goes on to say that "the day they replace Dutch in school with Papiamentu I prefer my children or cousins to not loose time in the school benches, learning papiamentu. I will keep them at home and teach them to make fish traps and fishing nets."³²²

In FB 27 (Dec. 19, 2017) COMM 308 refers to some other challenges for the success of Aruban students in the Netherlands as "the difference is that the majority of today's students can understand nor speak. So that is a problem for Aruba. The Dutch treat our Aruban students as second rank citizens and

Envez di cumpra cd di matamento cumpra cd pe mucha studia idioma. Ata e chines nan e juinan ta lanta cu chines I Papiamentu I mescos cu juinan latino I nos cu semper 5a hulandes nan ta pasa kk riba nos. Door prioridad robez

³²¹ Si awo caba e nivel di hulandes na school nan ta malo, ta con e lo bira si lesnan bay bira na Papiamentu? Hulanda hopi studie ta na Hulandes of Ingles. Laga education mane e ta y inverti mas placa den maestro nan nivel di Hulandes of Ingles

³²² dia nan hasi papiamentu un idioma na school envez hulandes prefera mi juinan of nietonan no bai perde tempo den banki, sinja papiamentu. lo tene nan cas, sinja nan traha canaster of sinja nan traha reda pa pisca.

even the Dutch students themselves have problems with their own language. The system is broken if you ask me!!”³²³

COMM 329 offers in FB 27, that “I am happy to serve as an example of the fact that one does not necessarily have to be proficient in the mother tongue before one can learn foreign languages and achieve and critical academic level.”³²⁴ and points out that “Maybe more research should be done to find out whether there are other success factors in our education that have nothing to do with the language of instruction?”³²⁵

Argumentation in support of the project mainly centered on the following arguments

1. If you are taught in your mother tongue, you are much more likely to be successful, including learning other languages

On August 18 2012, AUTH 3 states in FB 3:

³²³ E deferencia di ewendia ta cu majoria estudianta cu ta bin aki no ta compronde ni papie . Dus e problema di esei ta keda na Aruba . E Hulandesnan ta trata nos estudianta Arubano como tweederangsburger i asina mes e estudiantenan Hulandes, tambe tin problema cu nan mesun idoma !! Ta e systema ta frega, segun mi !!

³²⁴ Mi ta contento di por sirbi como un ehempel di e hecho cu no necesariamente mester domina e idioma materno prome pa asina despues domina otro idioma nan stranhero y yega na un nivel critico academico.

³²⁵ Kizas mester hasi (mas) investigacion serca nos tambe pa kizas yega na otro factornan cu a contribui na nos exito den nos estudio cu no tin di haber cu e instructietaal?

The Dutch language (in Aruba) only lives within the school. Nowhere else in Aruba Dutch is spoken. Nowhere else in Aruba Dutch is spoken. Well, if YOU think that Dutch is the language that ALL children in Aruba must learn and be proficient in and have as language of instruction from Kindergarten to HAVO/VWO in order to go study abroad: I want to say this: Thousands of children are in school and drown in Dutch, just for a handful that go to study in the Netherlands. More than 50 % of all children that finish HAVO/VWO/EPI do not go to the Netherlands. Moreover, we should be even more worried about 50% of the children in Aruba that do not even complete EPI nor HAVO nor VWO!

Look around you and see how many children speak English, Papiamentu and Spanish as their mother tongue. It is internationally known and proven that children learn better in their mother tongue, especially during preparatory and primary education. Therefore multilingual education is the way to go.

On an advanced (HAVO/VWO) or intermediate (=EPI) level, it is important that the child learns in the language of its future studies. At EPI, in hospitality: English, sector health/services: Dutch, HAVO/VWO schools: Dutch.³²⁶

³²⁶ E idioma Hulandes (na Aruba) ta biba SOLAMENTE den cura di scol. Ningun otro caminda na Aruba ta papia Hulanes. Awo, si ABO kier kere cu ta Hulandes ta e idioma cu TUR mucha na Aruba mester siña y domina y tin e como idioma di instruccion desde scol preparatorio

...

COMM 60 responds to this post claiming that “I never use Dutch but I am happy to have had it as it makes me feel smart... and however you look at it, all languages are important, yes, they should focus a little more on English in school... in Aruba we speak more than one language, or we should come up with a school in English that is not as expensive as ISA [International School Aruba].” This contribution is an illustration of the fact that one can live in Aruba without using Dutch (and apparently still feel smart having Dutch as part of the linguistic repertoire), and that at least diversification of the use of languages in schools would be a positive idea. The contributor makes the point that Dutch would be related to feeling smart.

In the same discussion, COMM 61 focuses on the development of Papiamentu and proficiency of its users. This person argues for achievement of equal opportunity for the children of Aruba through the introduction of Papiamentu as language of instruction:

(=kleuter) te ora e caba HAVO/VWOpa e bay studia afo: mi kier bisa esaki: Miles di mucha ta na scol y ta hoga cu e Hulandes, djis pa e algunnan cu ta bay sigui studia na HULANDA. Mas cu 50% di tur mucha cu caba EPI/HAVO/VWO no ta bay Hulanda. Mas ainda nos mester ta preocupa pa e echo cu mas cu 50% di tur e muchanan na Aruba no ta caba ni EPI, ni HAVO, ni VWO.

Wak rond di bo y mira cu tin hopi mucha cu tin Ingles, Papiamentu y Spaño como nan idioma materno. Ta mundialmente conoci y prueba cu un mucha ta siña miho den su idioma materno, sigur durante enseñansa preparatorio y primario/basico. Pesey un scol un enseñansa multilingual ta na su lugar.

Riba nivel avansa (=HAVO/VWO) of intermedio (=EPI) ta importante pa e mucha haya les den e idioma diu futuro estudio. Na EPI, sector hospitalario: Ingles, sector salubridad/servicio: Hulandes. Scolnan HAVO/VWO: Hulandes.

It is a pity that the people of Aruba can not express themselves well in their own language, and can not write it either! In order for people to develop themselves, they need to develop their language, as language is not only for us to communicate, but also for us to develop our thought patterns. We have come to a point where we can reason, argue, deliberate and if you can not come to this level in our own language, we will never be able to do that in another language. Finally our children will get equal treatment like other children in the world, which is that they will have the opportunity to learn in their own language.³²⁷

COMM 67 in FB 4 (September 14, 2012) refers to article 30 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, stating that “all children must have education in their mother tongue”³²⁸, this is not. Taking this argument further, COMM 67 makes the claim that “because until now the majority (not all) of our children of Aruba's mother tongue is Papiamentu and maybe their second language is Spanish, English, Kréyol etc, it is a CRIME that they are taught in a "foreign language" and not a "2nd language" and therefore many children

³²⁷ Pica cu hopi hende na Aruba no por expresa nan mes bon den nan mes idioma y no por skirbie tampoco! Pa un hende por desaroya su mes e mester desaroya su idioma, pasobra idioma no ta solamente un medio pa nos comunica nos mes, sino e medio pa cua nos ta desaroya nos pensamiento. Nos ta yega na e nivel na unda nos por rasona, argumenta, delibera y si bo no por yega na e nivel aki den bo mes idioma, nunca bo no lo por hacie den ningun otro idioma. Porfin nos alumnonan ta haya un trato igual cu tur mucha na mundo, esta cu nan ta haya e oportunidad pa siña den nan idioma materno

³²⁸ anto un otro cos tin un articulo den ley cu ta bisa cu TUR MUCHA MESTER HAYA EDUCACION NA NAN IDIOMA MATERNO

"choke" and they do not dare to ask questions, talk, debate so they develop their 4 competencies reading, talking, listening and writing...!!! Be it in Dutch or in Papiamentu Aruba."³²⁹ In this contribution COMM 67 successfully points out a number of fundamental challenges in the current system that are addressed by the PSML: children not daring to speak up, "choking", silencing and as such not developing core competencies.

In 2016 (June 7) AUTH 6 states in FB8 that Dutch is the foundation for failure for the Aruban children in primary schools, as "they are obliged to wear shoes that don't fit" and as "a child needs to understand what she is learning, instead of keeping on kicking the dead horse which is the Dutch language, and running the risk that she does not understand what she is reproducing." COMM 87 agrees: "Dutch has been for years the leading cause for many not to pass their exams it is a must subject which was understandable cause you would have to go study in the Netherlands afterwards."

In FB 12 (March 22, 2017) COMM 98 is the first to respond to the post and is in favor of the introduction of Papiamentu: "The answer is simple... it is what is best for our children. there are some schools that are dedicated to this:

³²⁹ paso' esaki te dia di awe nos muchanan di Aruba cu mayoria (no tur) nan idioma materno ta Papiamentu y kisas nan di 2 idioma na cas ta Spaans, Ingles, Creole etc e ta un CRIMEN cu nan ta haya les den un "Vreemde Taal" y no un "2de Taal" y pa e motibo aki hopi mucha ta "klapdicht" y no ta durf di puntra, papia, argumenta pa asina nan desaroya nan 4 habilidadnan cu ta lesa, papia, scucha y skirbi...!!! Tanto na Hulandes y Papiamentu Aruba

schakel³³⁰ for dutch, iberio³³¹ for spanish and international school³³² for english.”³³³ This same contributor shares personal experience from the Netherlands on the importance of the use of the home language: “When I lived in the Netherlands I worked as a volunteer for our people and one of the rules was that you had to speak the mother tongue of the children so they would have a language that they would be 100% proficient in. once they have that other languages are much easier to learn.”³³⁴ COMM 101 adds to this that “All scientific research point out that if the language of instruction is the mother tongue, this facilitates in all learning/ It gives the children confidence. The plain fear in Aruba that because we are small and that by the use of the mother tongue as instruction [language] we would be damned, holds no truth. It goes to your base..if your base is solid you can go anywhere.”³³⁵

FB 13 (March 29, 2017) focuses on the academic discussion on language and instruction on the basis of an interview with Ramon Todd Dandare, an Aruban

³³⁰ Schakel College is a Dutch language of instruction private school.

³³¹ Ibero-American Highschool is an English language of instruction high school that also uses Spanish for instruction.

³³² International School Aruba is an English language of instruction private high school.

³³³ "e contesta ta simpel... e ta loke ta miho pa nos muchanan. tin algun scol cu ja caba ta asigna pa esey. entre otro de schakel pa hulandes, iberio pa spanjo y international school pa ingles."

³³⁴ "Tempo ma biba na hulanda ma haci hopi trabou voluntario den stichting pa nos hendenan y un di e cosnan tbt cu mester papia e idioma materno cu e mucha pa asina e tin un idioma cu e ta controla 100%. una bez cu e tin esey otro idomanan ta mucha mas facil pa sinja."

³³⁵ "Tur investigacionan cientifico ta muestra cu e lenga di instruccion, ora e ta un lenga materno esaki lo percura pa un progreso den e habilidad pa capta tur materia. E ta duna e muchanan un zelfvertrouwen. E puro miedo na Aruba door cu nos ta chikito y e lenga materno como instruccion nos lo keda perhudica no ta bai op. E ta bai pa bo base..ora bo base ta bon bo por bai tur caminda."

linguist who has studied the Papiamentu language extensively and who is a renowned Aruban scholar.

In an article in Mas Noticia, Mr Dandare talks about a Canadian professor who is very surprised that the language of instruction in our primary education system is Dutch. Experts advise for primary education to be in the mother tongue, so in our case Papiamentu. Educational reform should go bottom up. So from primary to higher education. The same as when we build a house, you first build a solid foundation before you build the roof. Interesting read...³³⁶

The discussion that follows contains strong opinions that support Papiamentu as language of instruction, but also a considerable number of defenses for Dutch as language of instruction. COMM 119 reacts: "My personal experience is that if you are proficient in your own language, you will be able to be more proficient in another language too. Many studies have been conducted into that matter."³³⁷ COMM 90 points out that one "should talk with the teachers of the PSMK schools to understand that proficiency in Dutch has not risen and also not diminished because the children have received education in their own

³³⁶ "Den un articulo di Mas Noticia, Mr Dandare ta conta over un professor Canades cu a keda asombra cu ainda aki na Aruba, nos educacion basico ta na idioma Hulandes. Expertonan ta recomenda pa e educacion basico ta den e idioma maternal, pues den nos caso Papiamentu. Reformanan den ensenanza mester cuminsa desde abou bai ariba. Pues di basisschool pa hoger onderwijs. Mescos ora nos traha un cas, ta construi un fundeshi solido prome cu ta traha e dak! Interesante, boso bai lese..."

³³⁷ Mi propio experencia ta cu si bo por domina bo propio idioma bon, bo lo por domina un otro idioma mihó. Esaki tin hopi estudio hasi al respecto.

language first... But their general knowledge and their vocabulary and general interest have substantially increased because they received education in their own language."³³⁸ COMM 121 responds to COMM 90 and emphasizes that "language is the vessel. The mother tongue is a strong basis to guarantee transfer of knowledge, although it is not a guarantee for success"³³⁹ This contributor continues to warn that language is not the goal in itself, "Let us not get stuck in a discussion about language in itself. Our children deserve more than that"³⁴⁰. COMM 124 also confirms that "To learn a second or third language, the mother tongue basis must be there, otherwise it becomes difficult"³⁴¹ and emphasizes to have "tried the target language equals language of instruction principle, but that doesn't work."³⁴²

COM 119 reflects on his own experience as a father, a student and as an Aruban politician when it comes to the consequences of not having a solid foundation in the mother tongue:

Me too I have always ONLY spoken Papiamentu with my children at home, and they have gone to public schools. All 4 of them have done

³³⁸ papia cu e maestranan di e scolnan PSML pa boso wak cu e nivel di Hulandes no a subi ni a baha door cu e muchanan a cuminsa haya les den nan mesun idioma prome.... Pero nan algemene kennis y nan vocabulario y interes general si ta hopi mas amplio door di haya les den nan mes idioma....

³³⁹ Idioma ta vehiculo. Idioma materno ta e base fuerte pa garantisar transferencia aunque su so no ta garantisar exito.

³⁴⁰ Laga nos no mar'e na e discucion riba idioma solamente. Nos muchanan merece mas cu esey.

³⁴¹ Pa sinja un second language, o third, e basis moedertaal meste tei sino ta bira dificil.

³⁴² Mi ta purba di hanteer e doeltaal voertaal principe pero e no ta bai

well at University. I didn't have many problems with Dutch in the Netherlands either. But in the days when I was minister plenipotentiary in the Netherlands, the main reason why our students failed was language. And as far as I know, it is the same today.³⁴³

In FB 26 (2017, December 18) COMM 163 adds a new perspective to the conversation. Mixing English, Dutch and Papiamentu into one post (see footnote for original) COMM 163 questions the motives of those that are in favor of maintaining Dutch as a language of instruction but also refers to the link between language and power in this contribution:

How come we all can write in a decent english in this post? Since we start learning english just in the fifth grade. [...] now dutch must be further forced as language of instruction while our sweet Papiamentu is going to celebrate 15 years as an official language? Day by day our language is maltreated by those that want to make Aruba their home... Well I am the boss in my home and here we speak Papiamentu...³⁴⁴

³⁴³ Ami tambe a papia Papiamentu SO na cas cumi yuinan y nan a bai scolnan publico. Nan tur 4 a bai bon na Universidad. Mi tampoco tabata tin mucho problema cu Hulandes na Hulanda. Pero den e tempo cumi tabata Gev. Min na Hulanda e motibo cu nos studiantenan tabata faya, ta idioma. Y segun mi te awe eta asina.

³⁴⁴ How come we all can write in a decent english in this post? Since we start learning english just in the fifth grade. awor hulandes mestee sigui wordo forsa como idioma di instruccion caminda cu nos propio dushi papiamentu ta bay cumpli 15 aña di ta idioma oficial? Caminda cu dia pa dia nos idioma ta wordo maltrata pa esnan cu kier hasi Aruba nan cas... Wel in mijn huis ben ik de baas en hier wordt Papiaments gesproken...

On a more inclusive note, COMM 312 (FB 27, December 19, 2017) reflects on the importance of mother tongue based education as “It is good to have a starting point (thought) in your own language. Scientists (linguists) think so too. My wife came from Cuba with two children and both have achieved their master’s degree in the Netherlands. One came at the age of 18 and went to a Dutch course for 8 months after which he started evening school and came out as best graduate.”³⁴⁵

2. This project follows a research-based model

Throughout the years, participants in the discussions go a long way to illustrate and underscore the research-based nature of the introduction of Papiamento as language of instruction in primary education. Some of them even refer to papers and reports from various sources. On the other hand participants refer to the ongoing evaluation of the study outcomes of the pilot schools as well, however, some are quite critical about these outcomes.

In the discussion surrounding the introduction of the pilot schools, AUTH 1 who published FB 1, publishes a new post on the same topic (FB 4, September 14, 2012). This time it is a clipping of a short excerpt from a newspaper (most probably Amigoe as that was the only newspaper in Dutch that was readily available in these days). The post reads as follows:

³⁴⁵ Lo ta bon un punto di salida (pensa) den bo propio idioma. E científiconan(linguistanan) ta pensa asina. Mi casa a bin cu dos yiu di Cuba y tur a caba nan master na Hulanda. Un a bin cu 18 aña y a bai un curso di hulandes pa 8 luna pa despues dreña avondbavo y gradua como mihor graduado.

Oh really? So then why not find OTHER alternatives to strengthen our Children's Dutch from Kindergarten come up instead of pushin' Papiamento as Instruction Language 'till the 4th grade, down their throats.

While they themselves that set up this thing WITHOUT adequate communication, askin' themselves: [in Dutch] Whether all these plans will work out for Dutch proficiency among Aruban youth?³⁴⁶

No pun intended but a word that come to mind when I think about the children that undergoin' this "Papiamento Pilot Project"

Guinea Pigs.

The post contains a number of points of view that can be broken down into the following components. First of all, proficiency in Dutch appears to be the goal of education in Dutch, and teaching in Papiamento equals “pushin' Papiamento [...] down their throats”. Second, those that set this up (the department of education) did not communicate well, and apparently do not know whether this will work out. Third, the PSML is implicitly compared to Public Private Projects, government investment projects that were popular in that time and gave rise to concerns about the future negative impact of these projects. And fourth, the children in schools are compared to guinea pigs, yet again reinforcing the idea that this pilot project should be seen as an

³⁴⁶ Of het met al die plannen gaat lukken met het Nederlands bij de Arubaanse jongeren?

experiment at the expense of the children's futures, rather than a well prepared and research based implementation pilot.

COMM 51 challenges AUTH 1 in FB 4 (September 14, 2012), as the author would ignore the knowledge and experience that are the foundation of the pilot project: "Gosh AUTH 1, why don't you become a teacher yourself, since you obviously know it all so much better than the professors, Phd-ers and teachers???"

These discussions also emerge in later posts, for example in FB 12 (March 22, 2017) some of the reactions demonstrate the fatigue about the discussion on the language of instruction in Aruban schools. COMM 38 asks: "Question upon question . . . When will we attend to the Aruban population?"³⁴⁷ The contribution by COMM 106 reflects on the decades long continuation on this topic: "DISCUSSION ABOUT LANGUAGES.... HAS BEEN GOING ON FOR 50 YEARS..... SKILLS.....from your 5th year onwards.....why is this not the topic of scientific discussion.....we need to start one day....."³⁴⁸ COMM 105 expresses disbelief on the nature of the discussion: "Those who still believe that Papiamentu is not the language of instruction can not be in education. Go to whichever Mavo, Colegio or Epi and sit in a class, you will soon no what is what. The number of teachers that teach in Dutch can be counted on one

³⁴⁷ "Pregunta riba pregunta . . . Ki dia nos ta atende cu e grupo di Arubiano?"

³⁴⁸ "DISCUCION OVER IDIOMA....TA 50 ANJA ANDANDO.....VAARDIGHEDEN.....desde promer 5 anja na bida.....dicon e thema ey no ta e base di discuti scientificamente.....mester cuminsa un dia....."

hand. And primary school is no different."³⁴⁹ Teaching in Papiamentu may be commonplace, but the exams are in Dutch as COMM 105 remarks: "I totally agree that you can explain in Papiamentu. But you can not give them a test in Dutch afterwards that was downloaded from the internet by the teachers. I have issue with that."³⁵⁰

In FB 14 (May 29, 2017), the point that mother tongue based multilingual education is research based is made more explicit. The author of the reflection claims to quote Ramon Todd Dandare who draws attention to the fact that "it looks like when we talk about the introduction of Papiamentu, it is as if we are saying that Papiamentu will be the only language that the children will be getting, but that is not correct."³⁵¹ The research based approach is underlined in this reflection as "it is SCIENTIFICALLY proven (on the basis of a comparison between the students in class 4 of the two [pilot] schools and the students in class 4 of other schools) that children in the Scol Multilingual score SIGNIFICANTLY BETTER in all subjects and have developed a more critical study

³⁴⁹ "Esun cu ainda ta kere cu Papiamentu no ta e instructietaal no por ta den onderwijs. Bay cualkier Mavo, Colegio of Epi y sinta den un klas lo bo haya sa hopi liher mes kico ta kico. Bo por conta riba un man e aantal docentenan cu ta duna les na Hulandes. Y na lagere school no ta diferente."

³⁵⁰ "Ami ta full eens cu por splika na Papiamentu. Pero no pa duna toets despues den Hulandes dificil cu docente ta download di internet. Esey si mi tin issues cu ne."

³⁵¹ Continuamente ora nos papia di introduccion di Papiamentu na scol, ta manera cu nos ta bisa cu Papiamentu lo ta e unico lenga cu e muchanan ta bay haya, mientras cu esey no ta corecto.

attitude that the students in other schools."³⁵² Contrary to the students in the control schools, the students in the pilot schools are expected to have no more trouble with Dutch in secondary education. The reflection concludes that at the time the students of the Scol Multilingual will go to secondary schools, it will become clear that it is better to teach in the mother tongue, rather than to "stick to teaching in a foreign language [...] so you keep the results that we have now, where the majority of the children does not go to Havo-VWO, but to EPB and MAVO."³⁵³

In later discussions, reference to research plays a role too, as in FB 27 where COMM 325 states that "Psychology has demonstrated that for children to be able to function in a foreign language, they first need to learn to do that in their own mother tongue."³⁵⁴ Later on, the same contributor adds in response to COMM 329 who asks whether no research should be done into other failures of the education system that "it is underwritten by experts worldwide; That for a child to learn a foreign language you Have to first start with Linguistic Proficiency in the mother tongue. Exceptions like the one you refer

³⁵² na unda CIENTIFICAMENTE a keda demostra (a base di un comparacion di e alumnonan di Klas 4 di e dos scolnan ey cu alumnonan di Klas 4 di otro scol) cu e muchanan di Scol Multilingual ta score SIGNIFICATIVAMENTE MIHO pa loke ta studiamiento di tur materia y preparacion pa studia e materianan na un forma critico cu e alumnonan di otro scol.

³⁵³ keda cu e sistema di un lenga stranhero como lenga di instruccion, pa bo keda cu e resultado cu nos tin awor, cu e gran mayoria di nos alumnonan NO ta bay Havo-VWO, sino EPB y MAVO

³⁵⁴ Ciencia psicologico ta demonstra cu pa un mucha por hasi operacion linguistico den un idioma stranhero e mester siña haci esaki promer den su idioma mater o

to do not replace the science of psychology.”³⁵⁵ Irritation about the perceived transparency about the research on the introduction of the multilingual school really shows in FB 25 (December 15, 2017) where AUTH 20 cries out in capitals: “DO NOT JUST STATE THAT THE RESULTS ARE GOOD! SHOW THE PEOPLE PROOF! BECAUSE THE PEOPLE’S CHILDREN ARE THE ONES THAT GO TO SCHOOL AND WANT TO STUDY ABROAD!!!”³⁵⁶

3. The current system is failing the children, so we should welcome change

Most parties agree on the fact that the current system at the time of the introduction of the reforms is not benefiting the children in the schools, whether or not that has something to do with the language of instruction. For example, AUTH 1 (FB 4 September 14, 2012) agrees that something is wrong in the education system, but doubts whether that would have something to do with the language of instruction: “Children these days can not conduct a conversation in any language and Dutch is the worst of all of them. Let's not talk about writing. I somewhat agree that something must be done but implementing Papiamento as language of instruction? I have my doubts.”³⁵⁷ In

³⁵⁵ subraya dor expertonan mundialmente; Cu un mucha pa por siña un idioma stranhero Mester cuminsa promer cu Operacionnan Linguistico den su idioma materno.Excepcionnan manera di sra., no ta reemplasa ciencia psy ologico

³⁵⁶ NO DJIS BISA CU E RESULTADO TA BON! MUSTRA PUEBLO CU PRUEBA! PASO TA PUEBLO SU YUINAN TA BAY SCOL Y DSP KIER SIGI STUDIA AFO!!!

³⁵⁷ Muchanan awendia no por hiba un conversacion na ningun Idioma drechi anto Hulandes ta esun piyo di tur. No papia tampoco di scirbi. Mi ta somewhat di acuerdo cu algo mester wordo hasi pero pa implementa Papiamento como instructie taal? Mi tin mi dudanan.

the same discussion, COMM 67 uses some irony to confirm that the system with Dutch as language of instruction does not work: “That is why until today we claim that our island is multilingual but at the same time our youth and elderly do not speak adequate Papiamentu nor Dutch... Why then would a child that had English as a subject in school and goes to the US for studies be successful??? rarara”.³⁵⁸ This is an implicit defense of teaching languages as L1, L2 or FL on the basis of the context, and is also an implicit attack on the statements made by AUTH 1 and a defense of the PSML project.

COMM 113 also agrees that the education system needs fixing and reflects in FB 12 (March 22, 2017) that the low success ratios in higher education, asks for a re-evaluation of the school system:

In 1936 they have prohibited Papiamentu in schools and gone over to Dutch, benefiting the children of a couple of Dutch. When we look at the low percentage of those who are successful in higher education, I think it is logical that we must start to reevaluate our education system. The language doesn't fit. How can a child learn and express themselves in class when they do not have the vocabulary for that?

³⁵⁸ P'esey te dia di awe nos ta gaba cu nos ta un isla multilingual pero ni e Papiamentu y ni e Hulandes e muchanan/ hoben y hende grandi no ta domina adecuadamente... Dicon un mucha cu a haya ingles "als vak" anto si e bay Merca pa sigui studia e ta cab'e exitosamente??? rarara

Start with a good basis of Papiamentu so after they can learn Dutch better than they do now.³⁵⁹

One of the points that is rarely touched upon is the fact that although the education system prepares students to go abroad and study - primarily - in Dutch, most students do not pursue higher education abroad, and if they do so they are often not successful. The focus on Dutch as future language of higher education is considered by many to be an additional obstacle for the children's success in schools. In FB 13 (March 22, 2017) COMM 90 comments on that as

Many children stay behind in primary education as they are insufficiently proficient in Dutch up to the fact that they do not understand what they are being taught in that language..... One should look at how many children enter Kindergarten and how many actually leave the island to go and study in Dutch or English... It is a shame that the rest of the students stay behind frustrated in schools and give up too fast just because the language in which they are taught is their obstacle....³⁶⁰

³⁵⁹ "Na 1936 nan a prohibi Papiamentu na scol y a bay na uza Hulandes, pa motibo cu un paar di Hulandes twt kier a beneficia nan yuinan. Mirando e percentahe abou di esnan cu ta caba un estudio di nivel halto, mi ta haye logico cu mester cuminsa reevalua nos sistema di educacion. E lenguahe no ta pas. Con un mucha por siña y expresa nan mes den klas si nan no tin e vocabulario pa esaki? Cuminsa na tin un bon basis di Papiamentu pa asina yuda muchanan siña Hulandes mas mihor cu nan ta siña actualmente."

³⁶⁰ "Hopi mucha ta keda atras na scolnan basico paso nan no ta beheers e idioma Hulandes te pa nan comprende e stof cu nan ta haya den e idioma.....

...

4. Neither Dutch nor Papiamentu are world languages, Dutch will not open the world to you

This argument is used in two different ways: by those that want to propose the introduction of English as language of instruction, and by those that want to make the point that the argument that Papiamentu is – geographically - a small language, has little value when Papiamentu is compared with another geographically limited language like Dutch.

In FB 4 (September 14, 2012) COMM 67, apparently writing from the Netherlands, illustrates the scale of both languages to make the point that Dutch will not open the world to people:

To get back on the topic of Shell in Curaçao they have forgotten that in Aruba Lago had come (the big bosses spoke English) and because of that a lot of people that speak English have migrated to our island and have come with their culture, language, habits etc. After Lago closed Tourism became the thing for us and yet again Aruba focused on the American tourism market so English again!!! Who 2 blame???

Government? Parents? Teachers? The children? btw Many schools here in the Netherlands are totally in English or like at University you

Mester wak cuanto mucha ta drenta kleuter y cuanto ta laga e isla enberdad pa sigui nan estudio den Hulandes y Ingles... Ta hopi pica pa e resto di studiantenan cu ta keda atras y ta frustra na scol y ta give-up hopi lihe just paso e idioma cu nan ta haya les aden ta nan barera...."

will have classes in English, outside of Holland, apart from Belgium, you will hear no Dutch....!!!³⁶¹

COMM 90 (FB 13, March 29, 2017) considers Dutch in education to be a mistake, even a crime, but instead of opting for Papiamentu, this contributor proposes to switch to English instead: "Yes it is true that professional education abroad is in English so I say start in English in school because that is the language learn fastest.... Anyhow, I consider Dutch in schools for children in primary education in Aruba to be a crime 😊😞"³⁶² Later on, this same contributor reconfirms this statement and adds that for the children in schools, "Dutch is as difficult as Chinese, and they don't like it..."³⁶³ and goes on to add that "This will remain a topic that we'll never solve because many people in education have a revolutionary mindset and many people still think in a colonial way."³⁶⁴

³⁶¹ Pa bay bek riba e tema di Shell na Corsou nan a lubida cu na Aruba ta Lago a bini (e hefenan grandi ta papia Ingles) y cu esaki hopi persona di habla Ingles a imigra nos isla pa traha y a bin cu nan cultura, idioma, custumber etc. Dsp cu Lago a cera Tursimo a bira e cos mes mes pa nos cu atrobe semper Aruba a concentra riba e turismo di Merca dus Ingles again!!! Who 2 blame??? Gobierno? Mayor? Docente? E mucha? btw HOPI scol aki na Hulanda ta ful na Ingles of mane na Universidad bo ta haya cierto les na Ingles, pafa di Hulanda banda di Belgie bo no ta tende e Hulandes mes...!!!

³⁶² Si ta berdad cu beroepsopleiding den exterior ta na Ingles mi lo bisa cuminsa cu Ingles na scol paso e muchanan ta domina esaki hopi mas mihor.... Ainda mi ta haya cu Hulandes akinan na Aruba pa mucha di basis ta un crimen 😊😞

³⁶³ Pa nan ainda Hulandes ta mes moeilijk cu Chines y nan no gust'e..

³⁶⁴ Pero esaki ta bay keda un thema cu nos lo nunca lo tin un solucion p'e paso hopi hende ta revolucionario den enseñansa y hopi hende ta pensa ainda na un manera hopi colonialisa....

Some contributors focus on the opportunities for further studies in the region and do not believe that the maintenance of Dutch as language of instruction is useful. COMM 98 argues in FB 12 (March 22, 2017): “It is not realistic that children will see opportunity to go and study HBO in Dutch. There are a lot of alternatives in our own region. Even in the Netherlands many schools transition to English instruction for the simple reason that English is a universal language and the graduates can get started and work anywhere..”³⁶⁵

The rise of English is seen to be inevitable by many, COMM 131 in FB 14 (May 29, 2017) sees it this way: “[...] Whatever we do, English will become the language that we have to use [...] English because in the international commercial world, ENGLISH is the language of communication! FULL STOP.”³⁶⁶ In a later reply the same COMM 131 concludes that “SO.... let's go bilingual with English-Papiamentu, and add Spanish and Dutch to our multi-linguistic advantage!” The author of the post, AUTH 11, agrees, but adds a new perspective: “Agree, COMM 131, except for the addition of Dutch which apart from the historical (and maybe sentimental) connotation, has no other value, certainly nor for our possibilities in the field of international communications.” Upon which COMM 138 counters “or for the simple reason of necessity of communication and assimilation when abandoning our islands and settling in

³⁶⁵ Cu nos muchanan ta mira oportunidad pa bay HBO simplemente hulanda no ta realistico. Tin hopi otro opcion caminda den nos mesun area. Hasta na Hulanda hopi scol a bay over pa duna les den Ingles pa e simple motibo cu ingles ta un idioma universal y e graduado por habri su hala y bay traha tur caminda..

³⁶⁶ Kiko ku nos hasi, ta Ingles lo bira e idioma ku mas nos lo mester huza [...] INGLES, pasobra den e mundu komersial internashonal, ta INGLES ta e idioma di komunikashon! PUNTO.

Holland, maybe!?” This last contribution is exemplary for the double bind of decolonial islandness: the underlying reality of colonial connectedness remains a constant factor, also in discussions about language of education.

In FB 23 (December 14, 2017) COMM 268 asks “If our schools will be only in Papiamentu ... can you tell me where will the children go to study afterwards ??? As even now they have problems with Dutch 🤔🤔🤔.”³⁶⁷ COMM 184 responds to this “in america, Canada in the region... it is not only holland that has a university. Many renowned universities in the Netherlands have gone over to english as that is a more universal language.”³⁶⁸ The potential for studies in the region, including the US and Canada, are an emerging factor in the debate about language and education, despite the fact that these opportunities are still only available to the happy few.

Other reflections

An emerging pattern in the discussions is the lack of information or the lack of willingness of those voicing opinions to inform themselves. For example COMM 51 advises AUTH 1 “I have read your comments and my advice for you is to go and inform yourself well, if you do not want to continue and keep on speaking about a topic in such a way that demonstrates that you do not know about what your are speaking. [...] But that what you are saying about this

³⁶⁷ Si duna nos educashon na Papiamentu so ...por bisa mi na unda nos joven nan por bai sigi nan educashon despues ??? Ku awo mes nan tin problema ku Hulandes 🤔🤔🤔🤔🤔🤔

³⁶⁸ na merca, canada , den regio... no ta hulanda so tin universidad. by the hopi universidad renoba na hulanda a bay over na inglis paso e ta un idioma mas universal

project, makes people that know more about this laugh. Have a nice day”³⁶⁹
COMM 71 agrees with this and urges to “Inform yourself before you can make
comparisons or voice a counter opinion.”³⁷⁰ and later on even advises to
“attend a lecture on this topic and then form an opinion”³⁷¹

Not only are contributors pointing out that many are not sufficiently informed,
but another point is that the discussions are also driven by emotion. In FB 7
(April 24, 2015) COMM 79 limits the comment to a reflection on the fact that
the “big problem with this discussion is that emotion quickly takes over from
reason.”³⁷² Referring to - most probably - other discussions than this one, as
no grand emotions are being described in this exchange of viewpoints.

A final point of attention is the consideration that the situation on the ABC
islands might very well be so unique that no approaches or solutions from
abroad would ever fit the context In FB 13 (March 29, 2017) the author of the
post contributes to the discussion and challenges whether a specialist from
abroad would be capable of making assessments about the Aruban situation:
“COMM 116, this is a discussion that we have to take into consideration. We
should wait for the outcomes of the pilot schools. To see if indeed the

³⁶⁹ AUTH 1, mi a lesa tur bo comments y mi conseho ta pa abo bay informa bo mes bon, si bo
no kier sigui papia di un topico na un manera cu ta demonstra cu bo no sa di kico bo ta papia.
[Ami no ta bay duna bo e informacion, si abo ta haya cu bo sa tur cos, ta keda na abo.] Pero
locual abo ta paia tocante e proyecto aki, ta algo di hari pa tur hende cu sa mas cu bo. Feliz dia.

³⁷⁰ Informa bo mes pa despues por compora of saka argumento contra dje..

³⁷¹ Pabo por opina over di e proyecto aki, atende un lezing over di dje despues opina..

³⁷² Het grote probleem met deze discussie, is dat de emotie het vaak heel snel overneemt van
de redelijkheid.

Canadian professor is right or whether the situation on the ABC islands is so unique that they have not yet conducted a study that shows that our system is functional."³⁷³ COMM 116 adds that people from abroad can not understand our situation, misinterpreting that the professor from Canada that is mentioned would do a study about this:

Why would a professor from Canada have to do studies? Yes we have a unique situation in Aruba that they can not understand. You can not apply the same standards that have been used in other countries where children have many more options for studies after primary education in their own country and in their own language. This is not the case in ABC....for the simple reason that we are part of the Kingdom.... and as such a small island....our children have to be well prepared for if they want to follow their dreams and study abroad. And with Papiamentu in primary education their dutch and english will be deficient which will not help them if they want to go and study abroad. Tell the Canadian professor that I myself will write the "paper" for him. LOL. Oh my God, tiring!³⁷⁴

³⁷³ COMM 116, esaki ta un discucion cu nos lo mester tuma den consideration. Lo ta bon pa wachtaf kiko ta e resultado di e scolnan piloto. Pa wak di inderdaad e professor di Canada tin rason of gewoon e situacion di e ABC eilanden ta asina unico, cu nan no tin un estudio haci cu nos manera ta esun functioneel.

³⁷⁴ "COMM 116 Pakiko professor di Canada tin di hasi estudio? Si nos tin un situacion unico den ABC cu nan no por compronde toch. No por pas toe e mesun maatstaven cu a uza pa estudionan den otro paisnan caminda ora muchanan termina formacion basico tin suficiente

...

Upon this both COMM 117, 118 and COMM 119 agree completely and AUTH 10 concedes that the Aruban situation can not be compared to others.

opcionnan pa studia riba nivel academico na e mesun Pais y den e mesun idioma. Esaki no ta e caso na ABC....pa e simpel motibo cu nos ta parti di Koninkrijk....y derhalve islanan chikito....Nos muchanan mester wordo prepara debidamente pa si nan kier sigui pursue nan sonjonan den exterior, nan ta bon equipa. Y cu papiamento na basisschool nan lo tin un hulandes y ingles deficiente despues cu lo no yudanan si nan kier bai sigui studia den exterior. Bisa Profesor Canadees cu mi mes ta scirbi e "paper" pe. LOL.Cansami ohm!"

5.4 In conclusion

The introduction of this chapter promised that chapter 5 would contain a representation of bottom-up contributions that relate to LPP: reader's letters and contributions from the written media and social media discussions. The reader's letters and social media discussions allow for an understanding of current popular beliefs and assumptions on LPP. This chapter covered three critical junctures in the development of LPP in Aruba: the presentation of the 3 reports on educational reform by *Stuurgroep herstrukturering onderwijs* in 1988, the announcement of the pilot project *Proyecto Scol MultiLingual* (PSML) in 2012 and the announcement of the introduction of Papiamentu as language of instruction in all primary education in 2017. The data presented in this chapter allow us to conclude that the beliefs on language, education and societal development are consistent as they re-emerge across the bottom-up discussion and allow for the conclusion that the acceptance of Mother tongue based multilingual education in Aruba goes hand in hand with a slow and cyclic process of language acceptance and language making. Chapter 6 will tie together the insights from this current chapter in connection with global tendencies in understanding languages in education in decolonial multilingual societies (chapter 2), the theoretical understanding of language policy (chapter 3), the historical overview of legislation on the use of language in Aruba, policy on the use of language in Aruba and research on language policy and practice in Aruba (chapter 4).

Chapter 6: Discussion, critique and conclusions.

This chapter consists of an analysis and discussion of the discourse on language in Aruba in policy, research and in the public sphere as presented in chapters 4 and 5. It assesses the recurrence of specific themes across the range of genres and discourse types included in the data set, as well as the strength and consistency of the different beliefs about language and education expressed in the data. The chapter will conclude with a discussion of the maintenance of a non-inclusive language policy that is contextually inadequate in decolonial small island states through the construction of an adopted colonial belief system that builds on concepts of superiority and inferiority, power relations and path dependency/state traditions.

This study set out to develop an understanding of the construction of beliefs on language and power in decolonial small island states by means of an in-depth analysis of the historical development of beliefs in Aruba. In chapter five it was demonstrated that the beliefs presented in this study can be generally divided into colonial beliefs and decolonial beliefs, in relation to their impact on the decolonial crisis that also affects language policy and planning on the island. When I speak about colonial beliefs, I refer to the beliefs that underlie the voices that explicitly support the maintenance of the status quo with regards to languages, and when we refer to decolonial beliefs, we refer to the beliefs that underlie the voices that explicitly support educational reform and

the inclusion of Papiamentu as language of instruction in the classroom. The strength of the opposition to change is remarkable and is strongly voiced, despite the fact that (most) experts agree and are explicit about the fact that fundamental change is needed. The deconstruction and analysis of the discourse of opposition to change as presented in chapter five allows for an understanding of the colonial nature of the beliefs that underlie the opposition to the use of home languages in education. In order to be able to evaluate efforts for educational reform and to formulate a critique on the nature of the discourse concerning LPP itself, the beliefs that underpin the policy documents in chapter four are discussed in light of the assessment of recurrence of themes and beliefs as presented in chapter five. This will be followed by an evaluation of the current situation and a formulation of a multidimensional critique on LPP related discourse in Aruba.

6.1 Policy discourse on the language of instruction

The topic of the introduction of Papiamentu as language of instruction has been present in all policy documents that have been put forward since the establishment of Aruba's Status Aparte in 1986. In none of these documents, however, do we find any attempt to develop policy aimed at addressing the kind of negative attitudes towards the suitability and the use of Papiamentu that were evident in the data considered in chapter 5.

The first education reform plans for the new state of Aruba, published in 1988, were promising in their support for the introduction of Papiamentu as a

language of instruction in primary schools and as a subject in secondary schools. In this respect, these reform plans echoed the voices formerly expressed in the Antillean government 1981 report, titled *Enseñansa pa un i tur - een visie op het toekomstig onderwijsbeleid - education for one and all* (Beleidsnotacommissie, 1981) which focused on the introduction of mother tongue education in primary schools, and, where possible, in secondary schools as well. Issues related to orthography, the choice of a model for mother tongue instruction, the teaching of second and foreign languages, the training of teachers, the availability of educational materials, financial feasibility and planning for the introduction of a mother tongue based education system (p. 4) were all described as challenges. In preparation for the introduction of Papiamentu as language of instruction, the committee recommended the establishment of a linguistic institute for the development and standardization of Papiamentu as well as the introduction of Papiamentu as subject in primary and secondary education (p. 5). In both reports, there is neither any mention of social acceptance or adoption, nor any mention of a possible lack of political will or a possible lack of a sense of socio-economic urgency. It was tacitly assumed that parents, teachers, school boards, the private sector and policy makers and politicians would generally agree to and support the reforms including the recognition of the new role of Papiamentu in education.

This presumed support for reforms involving the recognition of the new role of Papiamentu in the classroom was confirmed in the foreword by the minister of welfare to the booklet that was produced for the 1994 Study Days sessions on *Ervaringen en nieuwe denkbeelden in taalonderwijs en taalplanning*

(Experiences and new notions in language education and language planning)

where he emphasized that a "government language policy is an imperative. This policy has to aim at reform." These words and those that follow in the booklet imply that there was not only a pressing need for a language policy that would lead to reform, rooted in the introduction of Papiamentu as language of instruction, but also that it was explicitly expected that such a reform would be supported, in contrast to the past, as there would now be consensus on the need for educational reform (Croes, 1994).

This very positive view on the acceptance of reform was based on the assumption that there would be no more "people who wanted to go back to the good old days" and that instead all that would be necessary was "consensus on how and when to start". This might lead one to think that there was consensus on where to go, and the main challenge would be limited to deciding how to get there. In hindsight this assumption seems to have been naïve. The next 25 years have demonstrated that all proposals for reform that would lead to the introduction of Papiamentu as language of instruction have been stymied by fierce debate and opposition. While consecutive Aruban governments have repeatedly changed direction and expectations on this issue, public opinion on the use of language in education has remained splintered too.

While Aruban curriculum designers were developing plans and materials to comply with language policy that would make Papiamentu a language of instruction in schools, the ministers of education of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, including Eddy Croes from Aruba, Jo Ritzen from the Netherlands

and Martha Dijkhoff from the Netherlands Antilles were developing a protocol for collaboration in education between the three countries. This protocol was signed in 1996 and stipulated that the three governments agreed that Dutch would be maintained as language of instruction in secondary education in the Caribbean parts of the Kingdom, with a possible exception made for the optional use of English in the Leeward islands. It was, at the same time, recognized that the use of Dutch as language of instruction would set high standards for language education in primary schools: "for proficiency in Dutch, special standards [would be] set in comparison to other foreign languages" and "primary education [would] emphasize acquisition of Dutch, at such a level that the connection with secondary education in the Netherlands [would be] possible". The ambitions for reform that were expressed in 1981, 1988 and 1994 were thus tempered down, as according to this protocol, Papiamentu would not become the language of instruction for secondary education, and additional stress would be put on the preparation of children in Aruban (and Antillean) schools for secondary education in the Netherlands. Without explicit mention of the 1996 protocol, the 1998 SHA report (Stuurgroep Herstructureren AVO, 1998) addresses the use of Dutch as language of instruction as a problematic matter but states that "The language of instruction in avo³⁷⁵ remains Dutch *for now*" (my italics) and "Dutch will be taught as a foreign language" (p. 20). The temporary status assigned to Dutch as language of instruction for secondary education and the emphasis on the teaching of Dutch as foreign language (which it is for the great majority of

³⁷⁵ general secondary education that prepares for tertiary education.

children in the Dutch Caribbean) illustrate the uncomfortable compromise that the authors of that report had to make between the foundational principles of the earlier plans, and the *status quo* that was adopted by the government representatives in the 1996 protocol.

Over the years, multiple government policy documents focused on the role of the language of instruction, and gradually policy makers have embraced the possibility of the development of an educational system that takes Papiamentu as the starting point for learning. However, in all models that have been proposed thus far, Papiamentu is positioned as the starting block, a tool for learning *another* language, positioning that *other* language as the ideal to be achieved through the initial use of Papiamentu. Even when the role of Papiamentu is restricted in this way, the resistance to reform persists. The Government of Aruba Education Vision and Policy 2013 – 2017 (Ministry of Education, Family Policy and Lifelong Learning, 2015) is quite ambiguous about the role of Papiamentu in education. While recognizing that something might need to be done in the area of language education, it mainly cautions that introduction of Papiamentu as language of instruction would exclude others as it is not the mother tongue of all children of Aruba. While the text reconfirms the government's commitment to the establishment of multilingual schools, it also states that the "model must be flexible with regard to the primary language of instruction so that schools can select Papiamentu, English or Dutch as the primary language of instruction" (p. 44). In the 2017 elections a new government was elected that promised to support the introduction of Papiamentu in Aruban schools. The 2017 governance program of the Aruban government (Gobierno di Aruba, 2017, p. 23) explicitly promises to give

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Papiamentu its deserved place in education, next to other languages, and in 2018, the minister of Education, Science and Sustainable Development, Rudy Lampe, announced the gradual introduction of a primary education system that follows the main principles of the Skol Multilingual. Whether or not that introduction of the multilingual school will be successful depends highly on the prioritization of the project and the availability of expertise, human resources, funds and support. As mentioned before in chapter 4.3, a multitude of plans have been announced by this ministry, including the development of an English-medium secondary school, the privatization of secondary schools, the introduction of additional testing modalities such as the American GED-system and the digitization of primary and secondary education.

6.2 An evaluation of current initiatives

In 2021, a clear government-endorsed language policy for Aruba that gives Papiamentu its deserved place in society still remains an imperative, as is a clear government-endorsed education policy that gives Papiamentu its deserved place in the classroom. The announcement of the introduction of Papiamentu as language of instruction in the multilingual school in Aruba in 2017 constituted an important step forward in the decolonization of Aruban language policy. However, there is still a very long way to go, not only because the necessary budgetary and human power priorities have still to be set to further reform the education system, but also because no mechanism has been officially put in place to further a wider consensus on the role of language in education and society. There is an ongoing debate about the role of languages in education and in society, but, as demonstrated in chapters four

and five, there is no consensus. As there is no consensus, there is little chance that there will be sufficient political, institutional and societal will and support for the prioritization of budgets and training of personnel for the introduction of Papiamentu in education, as set out in 1981 and 1988. This lack of consensus will persist as long as Aruban society does not come to terms with entrenched colonial beliefs in the superiority of the Dutch language and institutional arrangements.

Thus far, the development and subsequent implementation of language policy plans that come to terms with the underacknowledged and untapped potential of Papiamentu in Aruban society has been gradual and incremental, with the slow emergence of a general understanding of how the use of the colonial language has impeded effort towards inclusivity in education and society. Over the decades of the existence of the Aruban state since 1986, it has become more and more acceptable to speak out for the use of Papiamentu in education, governance and the judiciary. There has also been growing attention paid by an increasing number of Arubans to the multilingual reality of their island state, so that the monolingual ideology that exclusively favors the colonial language is beginning to lose its foothold. However, this does not mean that there is full society-wide recognition of the need to extend the use of Papiamentu to more formal contexts. In 2021, there is no comprehensive national language policy to promote Papiamentu, and Papiamentu is still excluded as a legal language. As far as the future use of Papiamentu in a reformed multilingual education system is concerned, such a move is still legally considered to be an exception for which according to Aruban law (Primary education ordinance 1989) *permission* needs to be

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granted by the minister of education. Furthermore, the official discourse in language policy papers focuses on the use of Papiamentu as a *starting point* for learning other languages, primarily Dutch - as the primary language of the Kingdom of the Netherlands - and English - as the primary language of globalization. This can also be deduced from the findings in chapter five, which indicate that for many - if not almost all - the ultimate goal of formal education is still to provide students with full academic proficiency in Dutch - or English - and not in Papiamentu. Papiamentu is still positioned as the stepping-stone that will enable higher learning in Dutch, rather than being positioned as a goal in its own right on the basis of a generally accepted understanding of the equality of languages.

6.3 Formulation of a text immanent, socio-diagnostic and prospective critique

The close analysis of the data presented in chapters four and five of this study allows us to formulate a text immanent, a socio-diagnostic and a prospective critique of discourse related to LPP in Aruba. The discourse immanent critique pertains to the contradictory and paradoxical nature of the debates on language and education in which colonial and decolonial voices alternate. In the following step I combine the insights that emerge from the text immanent critique with the contextual and theoretical knowledge that was presented in chapter two, which allows us to formulate a socio-diagnostic critique that builds on a critical perspective on the role and influence of the colonial imprint on decolonial state development. Finally, these insights combined with the

theoretical perspective on language and education that was presented in chapter three, allow for the formulation of a future oriented, prospective critique of LPP discourse in Aruba.

6.3.1 Text immanent critique

In public discussions, the positioning of Papiamentu goes hand in hand with a misconception about the status, use and potential of creole languages. The recurrence of the colonial beliefs on the superiority and inevitability of the use of the colonial language and, related to that, superiority and inevitability of the former colonizer's educational and judicial practices, play an important role in the discussions. The authors of educational reform documents recognize the existence of these beliefs in policy papers, such as: (Beleidsnotacommissie (1981), Comishon pa Introdukshon di Papiamentu (1988), Directie Onderwijs (1988), Instituto Pedagogico, Directie Onderwijs and SIMAR (1994), SHA (1998), Grupo di modelo di idioma (2002), SHA (2005), Departamento di Enseñansa Aruba (2007), Ministry of Education, Social Affairs and Infrastructure (2007), Comunidad di Practica di proyecto scol multilingual (2010), Ministry of Education, Family Policy and Lifelong Learning (2015), Fundacion Lanta Papiamentu (2018) and Directie Onderwijs Aruba (2019)). The existence of these beliefs is reconfirmed by the problematic track-record of language policy and planning initiatives in Aruba, especially when it comes to the use of Papiamentu as language of instruction, as the overview of critical studies and reflections from 1882 until 2020 in chapter 4.3 demonstrates. These beliefs do indeed exist, and they are still in ample evidence in editorials

and in reader's letters in the print media, as was revealed by the analysis of media discussion in chapter five.

One would expect linguistic awareness to be very high in a society in which the choices on the role and position of languages have such a weight. This is only partly true: everybody knows that there has been a lot of discussion on language related issues, and everybody knows that the multilingual nature and linguistic potential of the island might make its citizens uniquely placed to take advantage of a range of opportunities that are emerging worldwide under the current wave of globalization. Yet, there is a lack of a common understanding concerning LPP related challenges and opportunities when it comes to the use of languages in Aruban society. This lack of understanding is evident in social media discussions, where many participants call on others to inform themselves or "get real", as the discussants accuse each other of a lack of linguistic awareness.

Finally, the analysis of public discourse in chapter five has demonstrated that colonial beliefs persist in social media discussions and that these beliefs appear to represent a dominant ideology. It is still common for the elite few who had the linguistic and/or financial advantages to succeed in the Dutch-only education system in the past to blame the failure of the majority on the students themselves, the teachers - anything but the use of a language of instruction that is a foreign language for most of the students. It is also still common for people to refer to the national home language as an unfit tool for teaching, or even as unfit to be called a language. Moreover, it is common to consider the glorification of the colonial language to be "normal" and to take

its use as the only language of education and law on the island as unavoidable and inevitable. At the same time supporters of the use of Papiamentu in schools are commonly portrayed as naïve nationalists or derailed ideologues who fail to see the "real" problems of education and whose intention is to promote Papiamentu at the expense of the "advancement" or "development" of Aruban society.

6.3.2 Socio-diagnostic critique

The data presented in this study in combination with a critical perspective on the role and influence of the colonial imprint on decolonial state development as presented in chapter two allow us to formulate a socio-diagnostic critique of LPP related discourse in Aruba. Language policies in decolonial small island states are inadequate and not generally beneficial to the majority of the population when they do not recognize the colonial and decolonial realities in which they are implemented. The maintenance and reproduction of linguistic and other forms of privilege by small elites and expat communities contrasts with the need of the majority for decolonial emancipatory action. Developing a broadly accepted deeper understanding of the role of languages and multilingualism can inform the development of inclusive language policies. Such an understanding is fundamental for the decolonization of linguistic practices aimed towards true emancipation of languages and their speakers.

6.3.3 Prospective critique

Finally, building upon the text immanent critique and socio-diagnostic critique presented above in combination with the emerging understanding of

multilingual realities and practices and the theoretical framework on language and education as presented in chapter three allows us to formulate a future-related prospective critique of LPP related discourse in Aruba that sketches potential future pathways for the decolonization of education in multilingual decolonial states. Successfully embracing the multilingual reality of decolonial Aruba, and creating optimal opportunities that tap into the multilingual talents of the children in Aruban schools will require a change of mindset in which proficiency in Dutch may be one road to success, but not the only road. The rising global understanding of the value of multilingualism and of the value of translanguaging in the multilingual classroom together have the potential to foster the development of an understanding of the way in which Papiamentu can become a fully-fledged and generally accepted part of the present and future multilingual reality of Aruban society, both in the classroom and beyond.

6.4 Expanding the horizon

In chapter three, five studies were presented of small states in which the former colonizer's language(s) dominates the educational system as well as other domains of language use. The case of Aruba appears not to be a unique case. On the contrary, it is common to use the former colonizer's language and exclude the home language(s) of the majority of the population when it comes to education, governance and the judiciary, in disregard of the proven negative impacts of such practices on the majority of the population. Despite fundamental linguistic, historical, geographical and political differences among these countries, the development of linguistic awareness, or absence thereof,

in these decolonial states shows remarkable similarities when it comes to the lack of appreciation for the population's home language and the self-evidence of some uncritically accepted necessity to maintain the status quo.

In these cases, for more than 90 percent of the population the former colonizer's language is a foreign language. Still, these languages retain their position as official languages. In all cases whenever projects are developed that include local languages, these local languages are framed as no more than a stepping stone towards proficiency in the former colonizer's language. Moreover, the belief systems that underpin and perpetuate these policies and practices are resilient.

Initiatives to address this counterproductive situation have to compete for resources and support in an environment in which the former colonizer's language is still considered to be the norm, and the language of the majority of the population is considered to be less adequate or less valuable.

The most dramatic example of the persistence of the colonial imprint is Haiti, a country that has been struggling to come to terms with decolonial realities since 1804, as the painstakingly slow and incremental pace of change that might allow for the official use of Haitian Creole, the home language of more than 95 percent of the population demonstrates. Research has shown that the exclusive use of French in the Haitian education system is at the core of its consistent failure to equip students with an adequate formal education. French is maintained as the main language of instruction in Haiti, and is seen as the only gateway to educational success. The same superordinate/subordinate positioning of French over Haitian Creole, is

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replicated between Portuguese over Cape Verdean Creole in Cape Verde, French and English over Mauritian Creole in Mauritius, and Dutch over Papiamentu in Aruba. These unfortunate similarities help us to better understand the nature and persistence of the colonial linguistic imprint in these and other societies where there is no precolonial population that has survived as an indigenous group and there is no precolonial language that could serve as a decolonial rallying point. On the contrary, the home language of the majority of the populations of these island states is a creole language that came into existence because of the colonial past, just as the ethnic composition of these societies is a reflection of that same colonial past.

The development of language policy in eSwatini, Lesotho and Vanuatu further illustrates the complex nature of decolonial linguistic awareness. In these territories precolonial languages are the home language of the vast majority of the population. Yet in these cases, too, beliefs about the superiority of the colonial language and the inferiority of the home language have taken root. In these societies, the colonial language is considered to be superior for use in formal education, for gaining formal employment and is a tool of power in the hands of the national elites, whereas the home language is only used in the education system as a steppingstone toward learning the colonial language(s). In Vanuatu, colonial rule consisted of a very confusing and exclusive binational and bilingual consortium that was merely concerned with commercial affairs and the protection of its expatriate citizens. The new decolonial new state adopted both colonial languages as official languages and languages for education. As such, it also maintains the exclusive language regimes of the former colonizers at the expense of the development of its own citizens.

These short case studies demonstrate the recurrence of colonial linguistic patterns not only throughout time and across genres, but also across territories.

6.5 In conclusion

Despite low success rates and participation rates, and test scores in secondary and higher education on the one hand, and a strikingly low level of formal education attainment among the labor-active population on the other, the institutionalized use of the former colonizer's language, rooted and formalized in law, apparently still represents dominant LPP related discourse in Aruba, as well as in many other small island states. As such, it is consciously and/or unconsciously accepted and is supported by a majority of the population, who continue to be reluctant to embrace an inclusive use of their home languages for education, the judiciary and governance. The former colonizer's models and practices are in principle not disputed but rather taken for granted, whereas the possibility of development of more suitable and inclusive models is rejected off hand on the basis of beliefs about the prestige, use and function of languages.

It is evident that a large amount of research has been done that points out the detrimental impacts of the use of the colonial languages in education, governance and the judiciary. However, it is also evident that this research has not yet led to a collective understanding of the fundamental processes that lie at the heart of this seemingly intractable conundrum. The simple fact that this issue touches upon education studies, governance studies, law studies,

sociology, history, politics and sociolinguistics makes it a *de facto* interdisciplinary and even a transdisciplinary concern. Transdisciplinary understandings of multilingualism are crucial for the development of language policies that address the challenges that are being faced by decolonial states across the globe.

In the development of language policies in decolonial states, the use of the colonial language often automatically involves the former colonizer's language institutes and language regulators, consultants etc. Collaborations designed to address the challenges that inevitably arise when students are taught in a language that they do not know before entering the formal education system more often than not have a colonial top-down, north-south character. Academic institutions, governmental and political agencies, private consultancy firms and publisher are usually sent from the territory of the former colonizer to solve the 'problems' in the former colonies, though they usually have but a limited notion of the context and reality of these problems and resort to *off the shelf* approaches and solutions, based on colonial assumptions such as monolingualism as a universal norm. The successful decolonization of language policies would be greatly assisted by the establishment of networks of mutual support among decolonizing countries and decolonizing south-north networks, on the basis of deep understandings of the needs of the populations of formerly colonized territories that are rooted in the multilingual realities of these emerging states.

Nkonko Kamwangamalu (2019, p. 550) makes the point that in decolonial Africa "the post-colonial language policies adopted by African nations, [...] are,

in essence, a replica of inherited colonial language policies (Bamgbose, 1983); (Mchombo, 2014)." These language policies "favor former colonial languages – English, French, Portuguese, Spanish – over Africa's indigenous languages in all key institutions of the state, including the education system." Finally, he quotes Popham (1996, p. 39) to make the point that "while the engine of colonialism long ago ran out of steam, or did it [in Africa], the momentum of its languages remains formidable, and it is against their tyranny that smaller languages fight to survive" (Popham, 1996, p. 39) in *Masters* (1998, p. 717). The current study broadens this observation to encompass the position of languages in the Caribbean, but it also points out a much deeper underlying issue: in the former colonies, while the explicit colonization engine may have run out of steam, the implicit colonization engine is still very much operational and running quite smoothly, resonating from Africa to the Caribbean and beyond. Expanding Kamwangamalu's claim, I venture to say that his analysis is not only applicable to Africa and the Caribbean, but also to most, if not all, of the decolonizing world.

This implicit and deeply internalized engine of colonization operates through many of the voices that emerge in the debates on language and education. On the one hand activists, scholars and researchers call out for education reform in order to address the failing education systems that plague the societies of decolonial states, but on the other hand, these pleas are more often than not vigorously opposed by the general population, based on firmly entrenched negative attitudes toward using creole and indigenous languages as media of instruction in schools, and equally firmly entrenched positive attitudes toward the maintenance of the former colonizer's language as - the only - medium of

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instruction. Politicians who are called upon to take decisions on educational reform, are thus asked to take unpopular, controversial and insecure decisions that do not lead to short term wins - and as such short-term political gains. This in turn explains that only incremental change takes place as a compromise between the advocates of reform and the negative attitudes towards the use of the majority's languages. This incremental change leads to what Ericka Albaugh calls "local language light" (Albaugh, 2014) (Albaugh, forthcoming), a policy of compromise that sees the use of home languages in the classroom in the earliest years of schooling as a means to eventually reach sufficient proficiency in the former colonizer's language so that it can be used as the only medium of instruction as quickly as possible thereafter.

Hegemony based on monolingual dominance of colonial languages and cultures contrasts starkly with the multilingual realities of most decolonial states. Understanding the beliefs that underpin discourse surrounding LPP in Aruba and elsewhere allows us to better understand the impact of the colonial imprint and of the decolonial crisis, in which the decolonial governments have to come to terms with the complexities of compromise between the advocates of reform and the advocates of the colonial status quo while also having to deal with the most often one-directional support from the former colonizer's political and academic institutions.

The discourse historical approach adopted in this study has allowed us to formulate a text immanent critique, a socio-diagnostic critique and a future oriented critique of LPP in decolonizing societies as outlined in the present chapter. The underlying foundation of these critiques is the perspective that

language policy in education and beyond should be geared as much as possible toward the emancipation of the general population (chapter three, section two), and this provides a critical perspective for our analysis. This critical perspective contributes to "understanding the process by which social, economic, and political inequalities are created, masked, and sustained, as well as how language policies may undermine hierarchical systems and offer instead a wider range of life options for speakers of all language varieties" (Tollefson, 2013, p. 30). What emerges from our analysis is that, from the perspective of maximum emancipation of their populations, the efforts undertaken by decolonial governments are inadequate, not only in Aruba but also in the other territories studied in chapter three, section three.

As the analyses in chapter four, sections two and three have demonstrated, the inadequacy of the maintenance of Dutch as the language of instruction in Aruban classrooms has for a long time been acknowledged by a majority of researchers and policy advocates on the island and abroad. However, the legal embeddedness of the position of Dutch in education and law as described in chapter four, section one, in combination with the strong negative and colonial attitudes that are articulated in the public discourse as described in chapter five, have seriously impeded the implementation of reform, while supporting the maintenance of the status quo. This has drained the energy of generations of educators as well as negatively impacted the futures of generations of children in schools.

I have consistently and explicitly adopted a decolonizing perspective in this study, which aligns optimally with the general consensus among specialists in

education, linguists, and other fields that students learn best in their home language. Other perspectives could have been adopted, according to which language policy in education in decolonizing countries might be conceptualized as best geared towards conformity with the former colonizer's frameworks, or primarily geared towards globalization. Neither of these perspectives, however, can be reconciled with what has been demonstrated time and again to be best practice in the classroom. Moreover, from the point of view of the citizens of the decolonizing societies that are the subject of this study, such approaches seem to be more focused on geopolitical processes than on actual human beings. Recognizing these geopolitical processes is essential though. The formation of language policy in decolonial states is a process that is representative of the decolonial crisis that decolonial states go through, and that crisis is not only a crisis of the formerly colonized, but also of the former colonizer, as, however much some would like that to be a reality, colonization does not stop when the ink of the constitution of the new state is dry. Instead, the more covert, but nonetheless powerful forces of internalized colonial beliefs persist and have major impacts on shaping LPP.

In chapter two, section one, three different models of various aspects of the mechanics of language policy are considered. The first model is based on the work of Spolsky (2004, pp. 5-10), as visualized in Shohamy (2006, p. 53) and identifies three components of LPP: ecology, ideology and management. The second model was designed by Mijts (2018) and highlights the interdependence of language policy at *all* levels and in all directions, i.e. not only *top-down* and *bottom-up* but also *sideways*. The third model is based on Grin and Gazzola (2010, p. 13) and positions the types of argument that typify

political debates on LPP in order to provide insight into the politics of policy development processes. It is clear that each of these visualizations of LPP in itself misses points of the complexity of the formulation and implementation of language policy, especially in terms of the importance of belief systems in society, the contradictory forces which underpin decolonial relations, and the multi-faceted and multi-level character of the policy making processes. I therefore argue that insights of these three models need to be combined in a model in which the conceptual decomposition of language policy into ecology, ideology and planning at all levels is in continuous interaction with the policy decision processes at all possible levels. Only then it is possible to begin to come to grips with the complexities involved in policy development as public processes of the working out of LPP in the everyday realities of decolonizing societies and communities. These public processes of language policy development will continue to lead to policy outcomes that fail the societies upon which these policies are imposed. It is my hope that future research will build upon the foundation that I have established to formulate new models of decolonial language policy making in which the realization of decolonial interdependency and the recognition of the colonial imprint are as important as the recognition of the decolonial nature of the beliefs that underly the discursive practices of the discourse on language planning and policy.

The numbers of children whose futures have been and continue to be negatively affected by the language policies that have been inherited from colonial times are enormous, not only in Aruba or the rest of the Dutch Caribbean, but also throughout all decolonial societies that are facing similar challenges of linguistic inequality. These challenges have been the basis for

structural inequalities among the people of these countries. These inequalities, not only in Aruba but worldwide, diminish the opportunities of the less privileged and enhance the opportunities of the more privileged, if only through the recognition and glorification of their "superior" language skills. These inequalities are kept alive by educational policy and practice, where the roots are laid for the next generation of privileged elite who will perpetuate this process in spite of its proven consequences for the less privileged.

The former colonizer has not only robbed the countries involved of their natural resources but has also structurally marginalized the languages of the populations of these countries as well as their speakers. The futures of the people of those countries are highly affected by the marginalization of their language, their primary means of emancipation and democratization. And even then, when the populations of these countries in a self-effacing way, adopt the language of the former colonizer, they will still never be equal as their accents will undeniably set them apart and will forever frame them as the *other*. True equality will only be achieved when mutual respect for the languages of the formally colonized also reflects on the opportunities of the formerly colonized. At the end of the day, formal education systems in decolonizing societies need to be held accountable to their explicit and their proclaimed goals of assuring equal opportunity, rather than allowing them to continue to pursue the implicit goal of conformity with the standards of the former colonizers.

The decolonizing kingdom is ostensibly a pluricentric federation. In practice, however, resurgent colonial discourse often reifies, objectifies and marginalizes the policies and practices of the Caribbean parts of the kingdom as peripheral, local, *de West*. In contrast, pluricentric discourses recognize and re-center the fundamentally distinct nature of the context of the Caribbean islands as *grand* and *global* phenomena in their own right. As stated in chapter 2, section 2, the dominant discourses in the European part of the Kingdom depart from the framework of a *metropole* that studies, supports and feeds the Caribbean *periphery*, whereas in the Caribbean parts of the kingdom the dominant discourses alternate between that Eurocentric perspective and a pluricentric perspective of multiple autonomous entities that strive for decolonization, emancipation and democratization. As long as these perspectives do not converge, and Caribbean languages, governments and institutions remain consigned to the *local* and are not recognized in their *grand* or *global* character, the support for a uniform approach that truly works towards emancipation of the Caribbean parts of the Kingdom will continue to be insufficient to bring about substantial change.

There is a dire need for more research on how ideologies and belief systems concerning language, education and socio-economic development can expose the structural and ideological nature of inequality on the basis of language choices in multilingual decolonial states. Full support for transitions that favor the languages of the majority of the people of the former colonies can only materialize when the persistent beliefs about the inferiority of home languages vis a vis the languages of the former colonizers are identified, exposed and critically analyzed as remnants of the colonial past. It is only

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when that structural ideological nature of the debate is recognized that it can be addressed. Only then the slow incremental change in language policies in decolonial states can fully embrace their multilingual realities as unifying opportunities, rather than maintaining language policies based on subtractive multilingual or exclusive monolingual ideologies as separating tools for exclusion.

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List of abbreviations

ABC-islands: Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao, also referred to as the windward islands

ANA: Archivo Nacional Aruba

APA: Arubaanse Pedagogische Academie

AVO: Algemeen Voortgezet Onderwijs

EPB: Educacion Profesional Basico

EPI: Educacion Profesional Intermedio

HAVO: Hoger Aanvullend Voortgezet Onderwijs

HBS: Hogere Burgerschool

IPA: Instituto Pedagogico Arubano

LEP: Language Education Policies

LOI: Language of Instruction

LP: Language Policy

LPP: Language Planning and Policy

MBO: Middelbaar BeroepsOnderwijs

MOI: Medium of Instruction

OCT: Overseas Countries and Territories

P/C: Pidgins and Creoles

PSML: Proyecto Scol Multilingual

SAM: Scol Arubano Multilingual

SIMAR: Sindicato di Maestro di Aruba

SSS islands: Saba, Sint Eustatius and Sint Maarten. Also referred to as the Leeward islands

UA: Universidad di Aruba/University of Aruba

UNA: Universiteit van de Nederlandse Antillen

UoC: University of Curaçao

VWO: Voorbereidend Wetenschappelijk Onderwijs

